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SURFING ON YOUR TV

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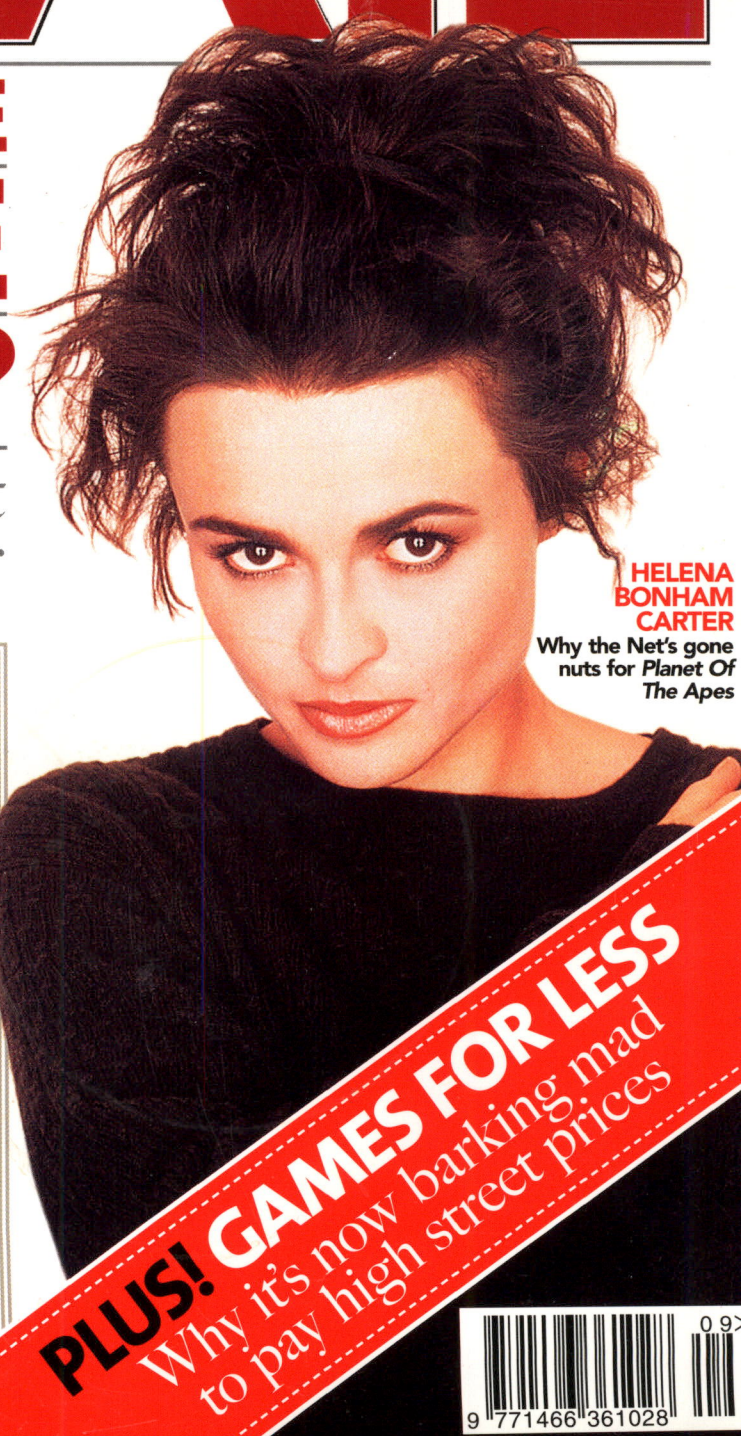

HELENA BONHAM CARTER

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ESSENTIALS

ABOUT US»
We're sworn to saving you time and money by bringing you the best of the Internet every month – and giving technical advice that will make mastering the Net cheaper and easier.

CONTACT US»
GROUP EDITOR Mark Payton
mark.payton@haynet.com
EDITOR Robert Jeffery
robert.jeffery@haynet.com
PRODUCTION EDITOR
Gary Parkinson
gary.parkinson@haynet.com
STAFF WRITER Alex Newby
alex.newby@haynet.com
TECHNICAL EDITOR
Daniel Grabham
daniel.grabham@haynet.com
ART EDITOR Anthony Moore
anthony.moore@haynet.com
PICTURE EDITOR
Richard Lawrence
richard.lawrence@haynet.com

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If you'd like to have our magazine delivered to your home every month – and save money in the process – just call 01795 414807 (see page 26 for more details).

LIVE 2001»
the net staff will be on hand at Live 2001, the UK's biggest consumer electronics show, at Birmingham NEC on 21-23 Sep. See page 56 for more details or call 0870 9020444 for tickets.

NEED HELP?»
Got a technical query? Call *the net* helpline on 020 8267 5933 between 2pm and 5pm each Thursday for one-on-one advice, or email ***thenetnow@haynet.com***.

TO ADVERTISE»
AD MANAGER John Burke
john.burke@haynet.com
CLASSIFIED SALES Gurbir Phull
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COVER PIC: TALBERT, LARSON, LA MOINE

:-) ED'S COMMENT

New technology should be more than just a fashion statement

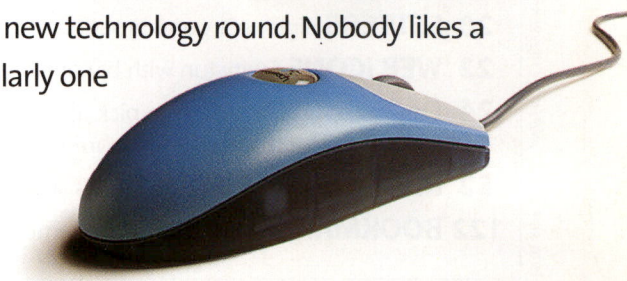
I've never had much time for so-called 'early adopters'. The type of person who's desperate to get their hands on every new piece of kit the second it hits the shelves – no matter how extortionately priced – is, I've always reasoned, more interested in looking clever than genuinely enhancing their life.

Is there any sight more galling than the goatee-sporting young executive, frantically text-messaging on their micro-scooter, frappuccino balanced precariously on the handlebars, extolling the virtues of obscure gadgetry to anyone who'll listen?

While there's no fun in being the party-pooper, we at *the net* prefer to maintain a healthy scepticism towards the new and the shiny. Yes, it's exciting to see how mind-blowing new technology can be, but the merits of gadgets should be judged on how they can change our everyday methods of working, playing and thinking, not just how clever we'll look down the pub.

That's why it's such a good time to be receptive to new products. Fads may come and go, WAP may or may not revolutionise our lives forever, but our postbag is bulging with letters from ordinary people who've found genuinely useful ways to employ new technology – and we've got more brilliant ideas in this issue. Whether you want to integrate your email to stay connected wherever you are (p112), take your music on the move (p34) or enjoy the newest, easiest way to access the Web through your telly (p40) you'll find real solutions we've road-tested for useability and usefulness.

Just remember – not everyone has access to such insider info, so be humble and share your new technology round. Nobody likes a smartarse, after all, particularly one with unkempt facial hair...



Robert Jeffery, **EDITOR**
robert.jeffery@haynet.com

thismonth»

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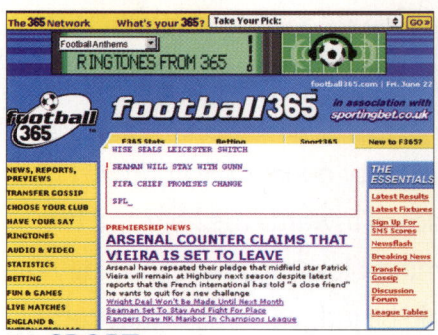
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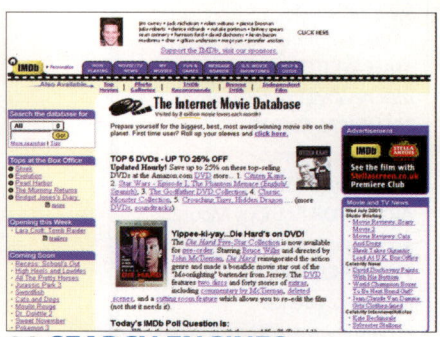

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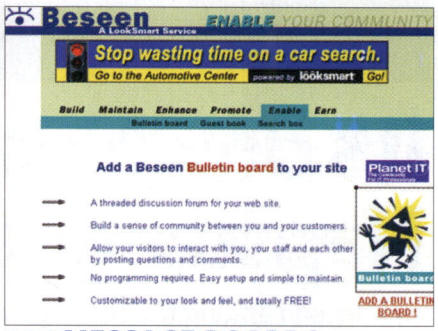
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No programming required. Easy setup and simple to maintain.
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Badly Drawn Boy, Stereophonics, Tricky and Ash: available legit via Napster

It's download heaven as Napster goes legal at last

Legit legend among file-sharers seals deals with independent labels across Europe

Newly-legit Napster has been busily striking deals with a series of record labels in its drive to become a recognised mainstream operation. It's expected that within a couple of months users will be able to download thousands of tracks as before – albeit at the cost of a subscription.

The new deals will allow Napster (***www.napster.com***) to offer thousands of tracks from European independent labels and will be the first tracks Napster will offer through its new subscription-based service. It's hoped that the typically more fervent fanbase of indie groups will drive up subscription rates as Napster reinvents itself.

Among the artists whose songs are involved are Moby, Ash, the Stereophonics, Tom Jones, Moloko and Underworld. Grand Royal, the label which is home to the Beastie Boys and Bran Van 3000, has also recently struck a deal with the formerly notorious file-sharing service.

napster
Join the largest, most diverse online community of music lovers in history by downloading and installing Napster. It's fun, simple, free, and available for Windows and the Mac.
News Flash!
File transfers have been temporarily suspended while Napster upgrades the databases that support our new file identification technology. Keep checking this space for updates.
Q&A on Temporary Suspension of File Transfers
Upgrade Now
Upgrade your Napster application to version 2.0 beta 10.3 for Windows or version 1.0 beta 2 for the Mac. All previous versions of Napster have been disabled. We're making this change as part of our ongoing effort to comply with the court's orders. It will take some time for our new filtering technology to accurately identify files, so initially, the number of files available will drop. As more users upgrade to the new versions and more files are identified, more music will become available through Napster. When you download the new application and log on, you're strengthening the Napster Community.

Napster: indie-kid heaven, at a price

Moby had previously threatened on his site ***www.moby-online.com*** to strip naked in protest at his songs being removed from Napster's service, stating he 'liked the idea' of people being able to listen to his music. Despite the tiny pianist's threat, the songs were pulled.

Napster CEO Hank Barry said the deal gave the file-sharing service the 'critical mass' it needed to become legitimate. It's thought that songs downloaded will not be of CD quality and, more importantly, Napster claims the files can't be burned onto CD. A subscription to the new service is likely to cost between £5 and £10 per month, depending on the level of use. Royalties will be paid to the artist and record company. The worldwide licensing agreement was brokered by the UK Association of Independent Music (AIM) and the European Independent Music Companies Association.

Napster creator Shawn Fanning said at a press conference in London that 150 independent labels were involved in the new deal. Barry added that the new subscription service will move Napster 'beyond the controversy of file sharing and into a new popularity.' The financial

Drive the information superhighway

Ever fancied a quick surf while you're in the car? Now you can, thanks to Volkswagen. With typical efficiency, the German car manufacturer has launched a new version of its popular Golf complete with Internet access.

Called the Golf eGeneration, the vehicle comes complete with a Hewlett Packard Jornada 548 PDA and infrared WAP Nokia 6210 phone. The phone has a handsfree system linking it to the PDA. Both are held within specially designed panels on the car's dashboard. The PDA will have access to weather and travel information as well as email. And there's an integrated MP3 player.

The services to go with the car have been developed by VW subsidiary Gedas and MSN and can be seen by going to ***www.volkswagen.de/mobileservices***, but it's in German.

Oddly, no one seems to have mentioned the increase in accidents that in-car Internet use might bring about. That said, everything is designed to be easily available via the PDA's touch screen and the Jornada can also be used to dial numbers on the phone – after all, fiddling is not an option for a driver.

The VW eGolf: is it a handicap?

VW is not alone in preparing cars for the information superhighway. Fiat (***www.fiat.com***) also has Internet extras available for its cars including a WAP phone and CD/MP3 stereo.

Sadly, the new Golf will cost £13,700, a grand more than a Netless model. But then, isn't it cheaper to buy cars from abroad via the Web...?

PICTURES: ANGELA LUBRANO/LIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

details of the deal are not known, but the actual process of sharing files is expected to be very similar to the Napster of yore. Over a million people signed up to beta test the new system.

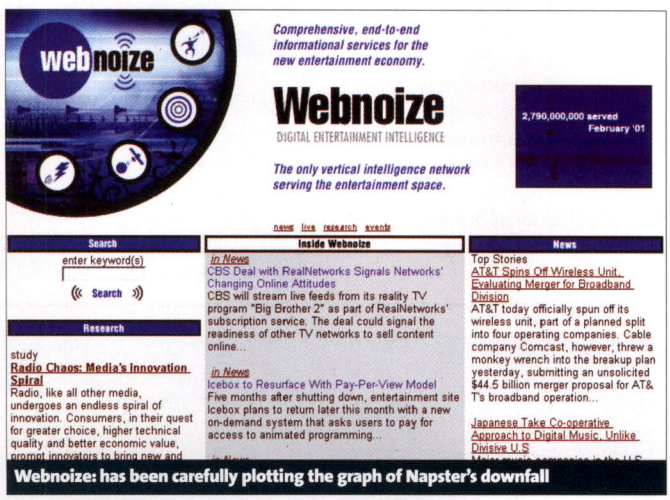
It's the latest in a line of distribution deals struck between Napster and the record industry. Earlier this year it become the third distribution partner of MusicNet, the new online music service set up by major labels EMI, Bertelsmann and AOLTimeWarner. The service will be fully available later in the year at ***www.musicnet.com***. Barry said at the time that the deal showed Napster's commitment to 'the Napster community,' whose members he termed 'the world's most enthusiastic music fans'.

According to ***www.cnet.com***, Napster could soon have access to 'more than half of the mainstream music most often sought by consumers.' This bodes well for Napster subscribers, and isn't really likely to have any more effect on record sales than home taping. Barry says music fans are keen to take up a subscription to compensate artists and 'get something more than they get on the radio or MTV'.

Napster users have dropped significantly since the legal injunction

Napster itself will be hoping to get something more from this deal: the file-sharer has plummeted in popularity since it was finally collared by the men in suits. A US federal appeal court rejected Napster's recent appeal against the March injunction which banned it from distributing copyrighted music. Napster users have dropped significantly since the injunction: according to analyst Webnoize (***www.webnoize.com***); 320,000 users shared an average 1.5 songs in June, down from 1.57 million users sharing an average of 220 songs in February, and 'only' 360 million files were being shared by the time the service was wound down (down from over 2.79 billion in February.)

As we went to press, Napster had shut down in order to transfer its systems to a subscription service.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enter keyword(s)
Search
Research
study
Radio Chaos: Media's Innovation Spiral
Radio, like all other media, undergoes an endless spiral of innovation. Consumers, in their quest for greater choice, higher technical quality and better economic value, prompt innovators to bring new and
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CBS Deal with RealNetworks Signals Networks' Changing Online Attitudes
CBS will stream live feeds from its reality TV program "Big Brother 2" as part of RealNetworks' subscription service. The deal could signal the readiness of other TV networks to sell content online...
In News
Icebox to Resurface With Pay-Per-View Model
Five months after shutting down, entertainment site Icebox plans to return later this month with a new on-demand system that asks users to pay for access to animated programming...
News
Top Stories
AT&T Spins Off Wireless Unit, Evaluating Merger for Broadband Division
AT&T today officially spun off its wireless unit, part of a planned split into four operating companies. Cable company Comcast, however, threw a monkey wrench into the breakup plan yesterday, submitting an unsolicited $44.5 billion merger proposal for AT&T's broadband operation...
Japanese Take Co-operative Approach to Digital Music, Unlike Divisive U.S
Webnoize: has been carefully plotting the graph of Napster's downfall

Stressed by the Web?

the net **helpline is available for all software, hardware, ISP and technical enquiries. Lines are open on Thursdays from 2pm to 5pm.**

020 8267 5933

or email thenetnow@haynet.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

FIRST BYTES»

› TICKETS, MONEY, PASSPORT, CORRECT DESTINATION...

A British couple who tried to book a holiday to Spain on the Net ended up in Italy, but only realised their mistake after asking another British couple where they were. It's thought the couple, who booked through Ryanair's Web site *www.ryanair.com*, clicked the wrong box on the site. The couple, from Hereford, were suspicious that they had flown over Milan to get to 'Spain' but initially presumed the Italian flags hanging from public buildings signified ice-cream parlours.

Ryanair: clearly states destination upon booking

› THE WRONG ARM OF THE LAW

An investigation has been launched in Canada after police officers were found to be swapping porn and crime-scene pictures amongst themselves. More than 60 uniformed and non-uniformed members of the Ontario Provincial Police were alleged to be involved in the practice. Superintendent Rick Kotwa told the *Toronto Sun* newspaper that many of the officers worked with staff at the Ministry of Natural Resources, which dismissed six staff and reprimanded 183 others for virtually the same offence.

› IS BIG BROTHER WATCHING?

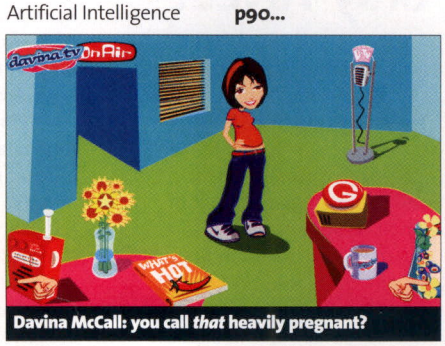
Big Brother **and** ***Streetmate*** **presenter Davina McCall has launched her own Web site. The site at *www.davinamccall.tv* turns the presenter into a cartoon character. The animation, created in Flash (download from *www.macromedia.com/flash* if you need to get the Flash plug-in) will gradually take the form of an Internet soap. Davina says the site is somewhere she can rant, and has also included a section on her baby, together with a delightful picture of her heavily-pregnant stomach.**

› NO SEX (SNAPS) IN THE OFFICE

The war against email smut continues apace. Email security firm MessageLabs (***www.messagelabs.com***) is now promoting Artificial Intelligence software which scans images in incoming messages for pornographic content. Recent tests show that one in four email image attachments are pornographic, but the new Image Composition Analysis software – created in conjunction with software developer First 4 Internet (***www.first4internet.co.uk***) – blocked 95 percent of the dodgy pics in an independent test, scanning 3000 images at 20 images per second. It even claims to be able to discern between porn and 'artistic nudes', thus answering almost as an afterthought the eternal question 'but is it ART?'.

› SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING

Newcastle University researchers claim they have developed a revolutionary super-efficient search engine during trials for the UK construction industry. The subscription-based engine aims to improve efficiency by encouraging users to be as specific as possible using prompted phrases that relate to the keywords they type in. Sadly not all of us are all that interested in construction – but if you are interested in improving the way you search the Net, see our guide on p90...



Davina McCall: you call *that* heavily pregnant?

Raphael Gray: no regrets about actions

Gates' hacker 'naive rather than malicious'

Nineteen-year old given three-year probation order

Teenage hacker Raphael Gray has escaped a prison sentence after pleading guilty to 10 charges of computer fraud which included stealing the credit card details of Microsoft supremo Bill Gates.

Gray, 19, then used the stolen details to send Gates a package of Viagra. He said he was 'mentally prepared' to be jailed, but instead Judge Gareth Davies gave him a three-year probation order and ordered him to undergo three years of psychiatric treatment.

Colin Nicholls QC, acting for the defence, said that Gray originally broke into the sites to show how bad security was. Overall, the teenager from Carmarthen accessed the details of 23,000 Internet shoppers in five countries. Some he had put onto other Web sites, others he had used to obtain £1399 worth of goods.

Justice Davies wryly pointed out that Gray had displayed 'a sense of humour' in sending the Viagra to Gates which, he noted, must have made even the Microsoft boss chuckle. However, he told Gray that he had 'caused great expense and inconvenience – running into hundreds of thousands of pounds', while still categorising his actions as 'naive rather than malicious.'

Broadband war breaks out on BT

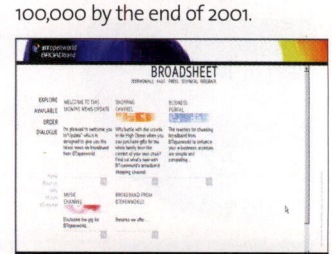
Rival cable operators Telewest and NTL have joined forces to undercut BT's broadband Net access package.

The operators said they were considering marketing the superfast Web access package for as little as £25 per month to digital TV customers.

BT recently said it was even thinking of raising its prices for its BTopenworld (***www.btopenworld.com***) package. The company currently charges £39.99 per month plus a £150 installation charge.

Telewest (***www.telewest.co.uk***) has already said it wants to obtain a total monthly revenue of between £60-70 per month per customer. Both it and NTL (***www.ntl.com***) have borrowed huge sums of money to dig up thousands of roads across the country to build their cable networks. The broadband offer is thought to be intended as an inticement to sell customers other products such as TV and phone packages.

Both NTL and Telewest have 45,000 broadband customers. NTL alone has set itself a target of 100,000 by the end of 2001.



BTopenworld: will prices go up?

Half of all emails travel only 10 feet

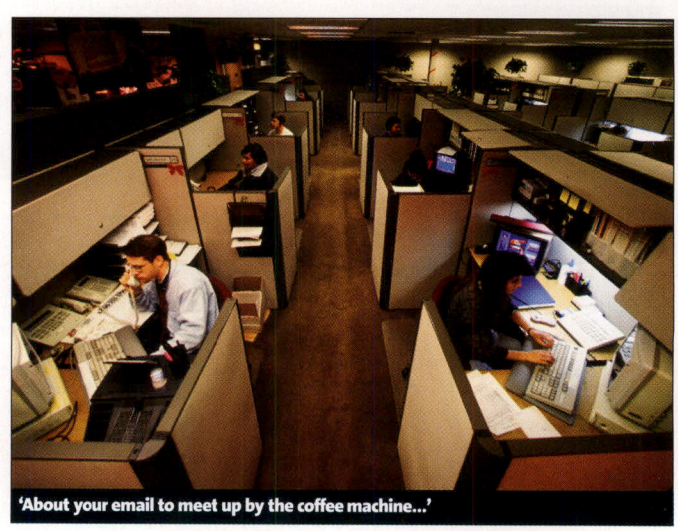
A survey of office workers has found that half regularly email colleagues less than 10 feet away. The study was carried out among 500 workers at biscuit makers Fox's and uncovered the shock news that a large amount of email is completely unnecessary.

Among the other findings was the discovery that over half of the users questioned had previously sent an embarrassing email to the wrong person.

The trends seem to be repeated in workplaces up and down the country and follow a spate of sackings and disciplinary procedures against email distributors, such as Royal and Sun Alliance's dismissal of 10 employees after the circulation of an email containing unsavoury Simpsons cartoons.

Among the cases reported by Ananova (***www.ananova.com***) was a woman who sent a 'private' email to her boyfriend, only to accidentally deliver it to someone else with the same name.

We'd love to say that here at *the net* we never make fools of ourselves in such a ridiculous fashion. Sadly, we can't.


'About your email to meet up by the coffee machine...'

PICTURES: PA, CORBIS, RETNA

Football highlights go mobile

The right to show football highlights on mobile phones starts this August – but no one will be able to see them. The somewhat ludicrous deal between the Premier League and Hutchison 3G has cost the company £35 million for three years' worth of rights for next-generation (3G) mobile phones.

Subscribers will be able to see goals almost the minute they are scored, along with stills and all the background information (results, fixtures and stats), but only from the start of the 2002-3 season.

Vodafone (***www.vodafone.co.uk***), sponsor of Manchester United, already provides a text message service for fans. Although the networks are playing down tie-ins with individual clubs, Vodafone's deal with United (***www.manumobile.com***) will only present a problem if the sponsors decide they want to show highlights themselves and 'their' clubs side with them – this could also apply to BTCellnet, which sponsors Middlesbrorough, and One2One, sponsor of Everton.

Some clubs have expressed concern over the Premier League's all-encompassing TV deals with Sky in the past as some of the richer clubs would prefer the freedom to arrange their own deals.

Similar arguments and problems may arise with the mobile phone deal.

The new licences for 3G mobiles have cost mobile operators billions, and are in no small part to blame for BT's current debt. Deals like this are seen as a good way to recoup debt through subscription costs.

Owen: soon appearing on your mobile

UK Internet users a happy bunch according to Oftel

The vast majority of UK Internet users are happy with the service they receive from their ISP, says a report by watchdog Oftel.

The survey also indicates that Web usage rocketed from 6 million last year to 10 million in May.

It's estimated that the Internet has now reached 40 per cent penetration into UK homes and that somebody in the UK dials up to the Net every eight seconds.

Ninety percent of users claimed they were happy with the performance of their ISP, a figure which must come as a surprise to staff members at ISP call centres. Freeserve was again the most popular individual provider with an 18 percent share of all users. Penetration of unmetered products among Net users has also risen to 24 percent from 18 percent last year. However, the number of subscribers to partially unmetered products has dropped from 17 to 11 percent.

There are some indications that the survey is slightly off the mark – two percent of respondents claimed to be using ADSL while three percent claimed they were using a cable modem. Industry figures make the case that neither of these technologies are quite that prevalent.

Usage has increased among all sectors of the market, but the survey also found that 19 percent of consumers aged over 55 surf the Net at home. Usage by area is still lowest in Wales (24 percent) and highest in the South of England and the Midlands.

MORI carried out the research on behalf of the industry watchdog and surveyed 2,089 adult UK Internet users. See the reports in full at ***www.oftel.gov.uk***.

HOW THE UK CONNECTS TO THE NET	
81%	Ordinary phone line and dial-up connection
10%	BT Highway or other ISDN connection
4%	Digital TV
3%	Mobile phone
2%	ADSL
5%	Other

KNOWHOW THE INSTANT EXPERT GUIDE

No.26: MMS

What's this, another bizarre abbreviation?
Indeed it is, well spotted. But what does it stand for?
I know, it's something to do with Microsoft's successful attempt to hand off a break-up.
Unfortunately not, no. The clue is in the last two letters.
Hang on – it's some variation on SMS text messaging isn't it?
Yes. The current SMS (Short Messaging Service) standard will become MMS – Multimedia Messaging Services. It will let users of the next generation of mobiles add pictures and even music and video to their existing text messages.
Oh, how exciting! But won't MMS become another one of these small technologies that never takes off?
Well, it appears not – Nokia, Motorola and Siemens have co-operated over the technology. It's even thought the technology will also standardise things that are currently only confined to Nokia users such as ringtones, graphics and screensavers.
So when are we going to see it then, eh?
It seems it'll be sooner than you think – it will be available on forthcoming GPRS (General Packet Radio Services) networks, otherwise known as 2.5G. It will also be incorporated into 3G technology in the future. It's planned to use MMS as a secret weapon to get the general public to sign up to the new generation of mobiles when they become available.
So, the companies are basically cashing in on the huge success of text messaging, aren't they?
Blimey, you are on top form today.
I know. I also reckon we've missed something out. I mean, don't you think that text messages are just like short emails anyway and, um, isn't this new MMS stuff even more like email? I mean, it's only like attaching things and stuff to your emails isn't it?
Funny you should say that. Nokia has demonstrated a way of using MMS on the Nokia 9210 Communicator, called the Nokia Artuse MMS Centre. This will also support messaging to email applications and messaging services. The technology will be available to mobile networks later on this year, but it's not clear when it will become available to consumers. See ***www.nokia.com/networks/mobile_internet*** for more details.
So, I'm going to have to wait for it, right?
You really are on the ball today, aren't you?

WIRELESS WORLD»

intelligence everywhere
Click to see who's talking...
I'M HERE
This way, please...
Imagine your phone guiding you to the nearest coffee shop. Or bar. Or water fountain. Or restroom. That's just one example of the intelligence that's in development – thanks to a new generation of smart machines and Web-enabled Motorola GPRS phones.
I NEED YOU
Explore the Intelligence Everywhere™ Microsite
MOTOROLA

Intelligence everywhere: Motorola's micro site extolling a truly wireless world

Motorola Accompli 008

On sale 'Some time in August'
Price Subject to contract

There's a little Bond in us all, a craving for elaborate toys that we excuse away in the name of work need. Take Motorola's new 008: a ground-breaking PDA-come-mobile that will sell not because of its ability to surf on the road, but because it is a bloody amazing toy.

Its most remarkable facet is its personal organiser interface. The big screen, revealed by flipping open the lid, promises a view of Web text that's a world evolved from the rest of today's wired mobiles.

And it delivers, mostly. The touch-sensitive screen is mono, and its resolution demands that only seven or eight lines of fairly large text can appear at any one time. The colour issue, we hear, Motorola is to resolve in 2002. As for the text, it is still preferable to the three lines of gibberish offered by many conventional WAP mobiles.

It may be, of course, that none of the graphics matter in everyday use. On the street, you want fast, accessible information, and that's exactly what the Motorola offers. It's also a delight to use single-handed, thanks to the thumb wheel (scroll down to the link you want, then just prod the wheel to activate it) and the up/down buttons on the fascia (handy when you want to flick down a whole page of text at a time).

In our two weeks with the Motorola, access to the GPRS network through our Vodafone SIM was consistent (on average, eight of 10 attempts to connect were successful) and reasonably fast – certainly quick enough to make zipping through the evening news on Yahoo! a pleasure and not a chore. And as you'd have every right to expect, the 008 can easily to configured to grab either your POP or IMAP mail in a few moments.

008: worthy of 007?

Adding bookmarks is a matter of inputting addresses either via the handwriting recognition software or else the pop-up-and-tap keyboard. In use, however, we found ourselves gravitating towards the use of a single portal (in our case, Yahoo!) – not least because of the thumb wheel's navigational benefits.

Elsewhere, you can sync your 008 with your desktop PC (using the supplied TruSync software), play games (three are supplied), perform conversions and even make voice notes.

But that's enough of the cerebral stuff. The shameful truth is that we want a 008 for the way it looks. Now pay attention, Bond...

Frequency 900 / 1800 / GPRS
Memory 4MB
www.motorola.com

Tim Richardson

OPINION BIG BROTHER: THE SCAM

The continuing success of cult TV show *Big Brother* is due, in part, to the liberal helpings of deception and intrigue that go hand-in-hand with the programme. Of course, I'm not referring to the antics of the assembled crowd of misfits who, it seems, will endure extreme ridicule and emotional hardship in their quest to win the £70,000 prize.

No, it's what happens on the outside of the BB house that can be so underhand at times. Forget the personal bitching and nastiness of the housemates. Outside the BB house, it's the viewers who are the real victims as people go to all sorts of comical lengths to manipulate the all-important vote.

Big Brother organisers launched Scamwatch on the BB site to warn fans

There were fears that the eviction process had been rigged after some people were duped into voting to evict certain housemates in the mistaken belief they were entering a competition.

Emails winged their way around the Internet offering readers free holidays, Pokémon cards, trainers – even free sex – if they phoned a certain number.

Of course, the number didn't bring them free anything – just another vote to evict Amma or Paul or Josh or Bubble or whoever. In a bid to alert BB fans about these stings, organisers launched 'Scamwatch' on the BB Web site. 'If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is,' warned BB.

Wise words indeed, but bearing in mind that this kind of scam is replicated thousands of times a day on the Net, it seemed hardly worth the effort. Scams are a harsh fact of life online, and for many people Big Brother has also become part of that life.

Fans have been able to keep up with events by receiving email bulletins, and SMS and WAP updates on their mobile phones. Combine that with the fact that millions of people kept up with the latest from the BB house by accessing the Web site, and you begin to realise that this isn't just a TV hit – it's a genuine multimedia cult.

However there is a price for this success. Last year, for example, BB reportedly cost British industry around £1.4 million a week in lost productivity as employees skipped work and watched BB on the Web instead.

And all to watch a bunch of strangers locked up in a house. Whatever next?

REG.
TM.
BECK'S
IMPORTED
BRAUEREI BECK & CO
REG.
TM.
BECK'S
BIER · BEER
BREMEN 1874 · PHILADELPHIA 1876
BREMEN · GERMANY

NORTHERN

Statattack»

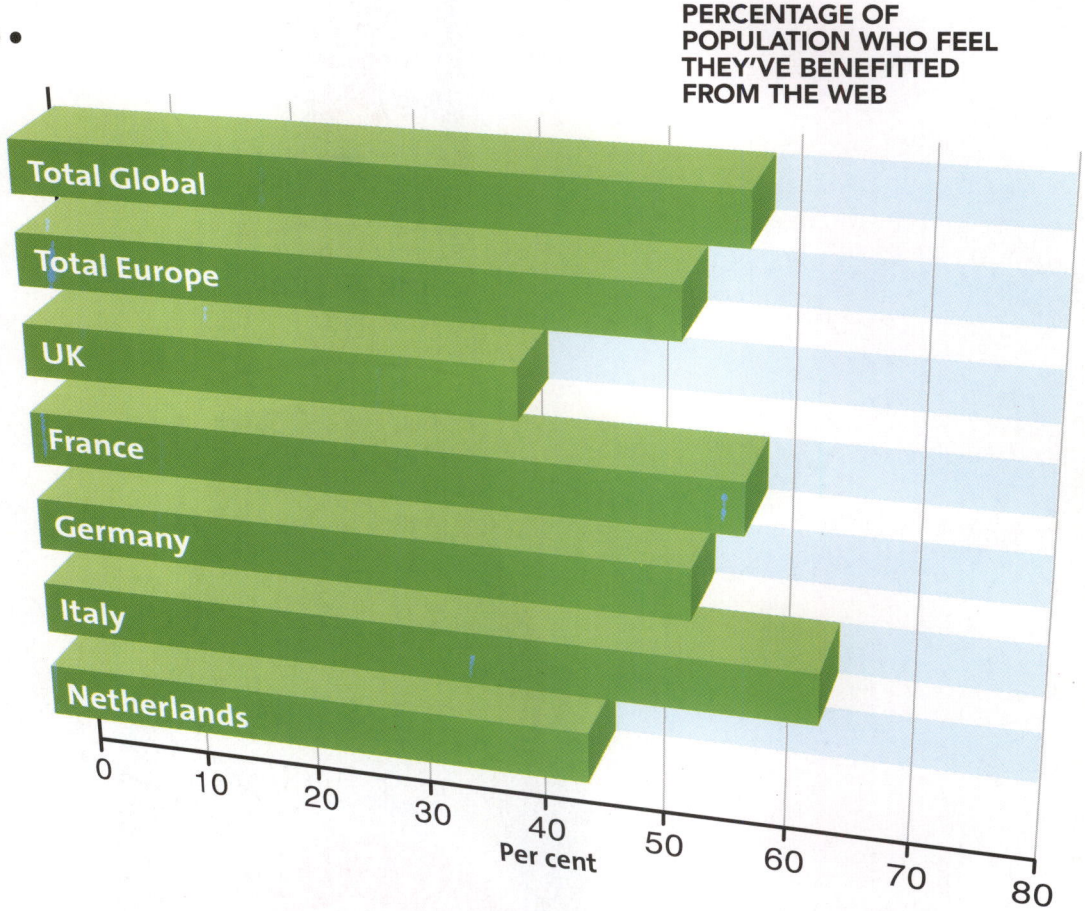
:// The Web in charts and graphs

We can't get no satisfaction...

The British feel less enriched by the advent of the Web than citizens of any other major European country, the latest statistics claim.

A Euro RSCG survey found that 58 percent of all surfers consider they have become 'better informed citizens' since going online, though in the UK that figure drops to a mere 40 percent. Perhaps Brits are simply more cynical about new technology – or maybe the quality of sites or information available in this country pales in comparison with our Continental cousins. Or perhaps we don't view the Web as something which should make us better informed, just as another form of entertainment.

Overall, the Italians are most pleased with getting wired, reporting 64 percent satisfaction, with France (58 percent), Germany (54 percent) and the Netherlands (46 percent) not far behind. Perhaps something for Tony Blair to think about next time he launches one of his 'let's all get online' crusades...



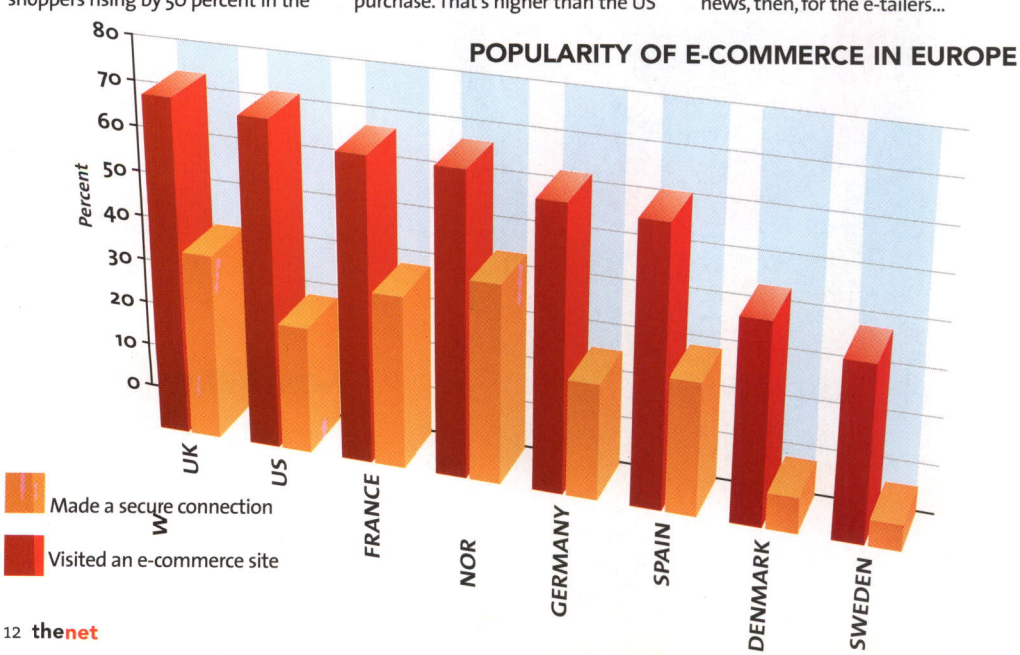
ILLUSTRATIONS: PETER LIDDIARD

...but we're still more likely to spend money online

The British visit more e-commerce sites and make more secure connections than any other Europeans, according to a new Netvalue survey into online spending.

With the overall number of online shoppers rising by 50 percent in the past year, the UK seems to be leading the way. Over 42 percent of respondents reported making a secure connection to an e-commerce site in May, though the poll doesn't note how many of them made a purchase. That's higher than the US (28.8 percent), France (39.2 percent) and Spain (30.4 percent).

We also visit more shopping sites – with 75.9 percent of Brit surfers having done so – than any other nation, including the States. Good news, then, for the e-tailers...



QUICK FIGURES

YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT...»

■ The latest figures on wired Britain are even more positive than other recent surveys. Which? Online says 36 percent of Brits are now connected to the Internet, up 9 percent on last year, though 63 percent of them surf for under five hours a week and visit an average of 12 sites, less than last year.

■ **Only one in 10 people can even remember their bank manager's name, says a Microsoft survey which suggests the rise in Net banking has diminished face-to-face contact.**

■ Supermarket shopping could soon account for 40 percent of all e-commerce, according to a survey which points to Tesco as the site most likely to benefit. It also reports that there are 5.9 million UK online shoppers – a figure which could more than double in the next five years.

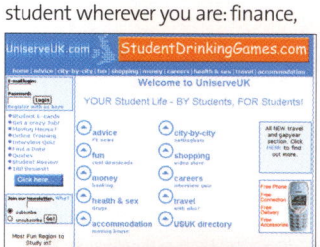
CENSOR

A little bit of study pays off

UNISERVEUK ***www.uniserveuk.com*** Wondering where to go and what to do at Uni? This site will help, wherever you are…

Students have it hard. No money, dodgy digs and a poor diet, not to mention the hours of enforced labour. But there is hope. In a bid to save them from this misery, UniserveUK offers students advice and information to help them make the most of those precious last three years of freedom. That includes a one-stop shop for each city's local pubs, clubs, take-aways and taxi firms, but also rather more.

It started in 1999 as founders David Chewter and Gregory Kris enjoyed a meal and a bottle of plonk. 'We were discussing ideas for a useful site, and came up with student-orientated listings on the Web,' recalls Chewter. 'But rather than just offer restaurants or pubs and clubs, we thought we'd provide an all-encompassing guide, with information about what it's like to be a student wherever you are: finance, sharing a house, that side of things.'



UniserveUK: work, rest and play

The articles are penned by a team of experts: '95 percent of the stuff is written by students or recent graduates.' For Chewter, it's that insider's view which makes the site special. 'What you wouldn't have been able to do before if, say, you were thinking about going to Bristol, is have someone in Bristol tell you exactly where the best place to go out is.'

David Chewter: full of beans

With 50 City Guides and advice on choosing a degree or a university, it's clear that the site's main audience is prospective students. 'Initially what we're trying to do is target people before they go to university,' explains Chewter. 'But what we're also looking to do is to start offering a lot more for people who are students at the moment, and stuff for graduates as well.' In addition to the study advice already offered, that means a new job-search facility and a free online CV writing service.

And there's already been a spin-off: ***StudentDrinkingGames.com***. 'We've had some very good feedback about that, and some reasonable traffic in the first few weeks.' Funny, that...

Keeping kids safe from harm

CHILD ALERT ***www.childalert.co.uk*** Mind that child with expert medical help and advice

Among the many reasons for starting a dot com – money, fame, self-employment – social conscience isn't normally near the top of the list. For Child Alert's Clare Scott-Dryden, however, it was a desire to help others, inspired by a domestic near-disaster, which kick-started her online ambitions.

Two years ago, the former marketeer's young daughter fell down a flight of stairs at home: 'We were lucky – she wasn't hurt – but it struck me that I wouldn't know what to do in a situation like that except take her straight to casualty.'

After starting a business selling boards with home safety tips to retailers, Scott-Dryden decided the best and cheapest way to spread the word about child protection was to start a site. Child Alert is the result: 'Nobody knew where to go for information,' she says, 'so the site expanded rapidly. People can take the information in small chunks, as much or as little at a time as they like.'

Child Alert: keeping the nippers happy and healthy

The site has quickly garnered plaudits for its effortless useability and huge amount of handy information aimed at parents and carers. It's split into safety and wellbeing sections, and includes tips on health during pregnancy, infant safety, illnesses, creating a child-friendly home and encouraging older kids to explore the world safely. In short, it's a one-stop shop for parents confused or anxious about the finer points of child-rearing.

Among the most popular features is the panel of experts available to answer specific questions on health both before, during and after pregnancy – Childalert has access to a team of GPs, nutritionists and psychologists via email.

It's a tactic which has certainly pulled in the visitors, with the site already attracting 200,000 page impressions a month and the average user staying for an impressive 7-10 minutes. Scott-Dryden employs a team of five staff to keep the site updated, with plans afoot for a spin-off book and board game. A little concern, it seems, can go a long way in the dot com world...

WORDS: ALEX NEWBY (UNISERVEUK), ROBERT JEFFERY (CHILD ALERT); PICTURES: RICHARD LAWRENCE

TEETOTALLER

siteinsider»

:// Whispers from the worlds of music, movies and games

MOVIES

Why the Web's gone ape

Planet Of The Apes – without doubt this summer's must-see film and the biggest Web buzz since *The Phantom Menace*

***Planet of the Apes:* creating an online buzz through its official site – and an army of unofficial efforts**

Hollywood is a risky business and that's never truer than when it comes to remaking its finest hours. 'The first rule of remakes is never remake a great movie,' says Tim Burton, whose version of the sci-fi classic *Planet of The Apes* is set to light up the summer box office. So isn't he betraying his own mantra? 'But that's what appealed to me. I guess I'm kind of perverse that way!'

However, this new film is not a remake, but a 're-imagining', only keeping the basic premise. So, while a suitably epic twist ending is promised, it won't involve a beached Statue of Liberty. Even so, if you were one of the millions who downloaded the first trailer earlier in the year, Burton's vision is startlingly different, not to say darker. Charlton Heston has been replaced by buffed hero Mark Wahlberg and the well-dressed, Roddy McDowall-toned apes have been transformed into astounding hordes of imperious, mean-looking ones, voiced by the likes of Tim Roth. The official site (***www.planetoftheapes.com***) is certainly a great taster of what's to come, only too eager to showcase the eye-catching design and effects work. With a Flash-heavy design, the site boasts an excellent futuristic feel, easily navigated with little confusion. Being an official affair, there's plenty of PR-friendly info about cast and crew as well as intriguing behind the scenes peeks at the production, but spoiler-hunters will find little to salivate over.

However, a plethora of interactive elements (including an excellent sweepstakes contest involving Global Positioning Systems) add up to a truly enjoyable and atmospheric look at what promises to be one hell of a film. Of course, while studio sites aim to entice with tempting tidbits of information, some people just can't get enough and want every possible detail.

Not unlike the superlative Spider Man Hype (see p64), The Visitor (***planetOapes.tripod.com***) has consciously aimed to be the ultimate up-to-date guide to the new *Apes*. While not quite reaching that site's level of coverage, it's pretty close, with information culled from an impressive array of news sources. With a very straightforward design, the accent is on the content, which it supplies in spades, and will cater for a wide spectrum of fans.

Following the production with admirable tenacity, it's all bolstered by a large amount of pictures, from promotional to fan, and, as an online jumping point for *Apes* enthusiasts, cannot fail to impress or lead to further discoveries.

MUSIC

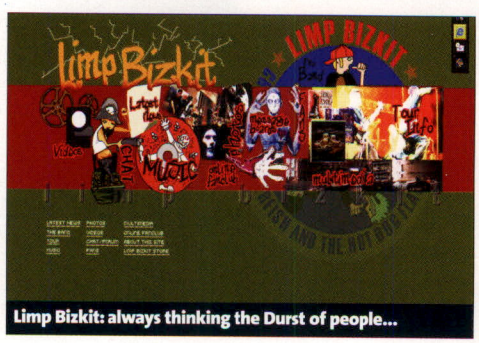
Doin' it for the kids

The stars who'll give you the words from their mouths online

Fred Durst knows why you want to hate him – and frankly he's had enough. 'There is so much Hatorade being drunk out there. Every magazine, paper, band, etc is on a Limp-hating rampage,' he wrote recently in his barely literate online diary on the official Limp Bizkit site (***www.limpbizkit.com***). 'We've cut off all press around the world. All we need to do is stay in tuned with you and where your head is at.' So if you want to know what's happening below Mr Durst's balding, pudgy pate, you have to check out his Web memoirs on a regular basis.

Thus far Fred has told us all about his forthcoming offspring ('I'm not getting married or anything like that, but I am going to support the child') and revealed his favourite sites ('go to ***stickdeath.com***, it's funny').

You might think that Durst's disappearance into cyberspace is extreme, but the only real surprise is that it doesn't happen more often. Bands love to moan about journalists twisting their words and making them look like clowns (literally, in the the Stereophonics' *Mr Writer* video) so why not preach directly to your following? The only Garbage news in the last year has come from Shirley Manson's studio diary at ***www.garbage.com***, where she takes time off from recording to be mean about Radiohead ('forced' and 'fake', apparently).

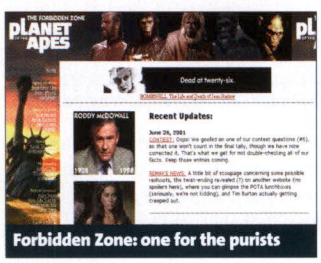


Limp Bizkit: always thinking the Durst of people...

***Apes* fans: they're going bananas**

Of course, the original film spawned an impressive legacy, with an array of sequels, series (both TV and animated) and a plethora of merchandising and other assorted spin-offs. All this and more are celebrated at Planet of the Apes: The Forbidden Zone (***members.nbci.com/planetofapes***). A comprehensive fan site, this is a great portal to discover *POTA*'s multimedia presence. While news of the remake is present, the site is very much aimed at fans of the original series.

Among the teeming info, there's superlative trivia (Edward G Robinson might have played Dr Zaius!) and a comprehensive listing of the various deleted scenes, while an article archive caters for such intellectual concerns as 'POTA as American Myth'. Best of all, a fair-sized sound gallery allows the unmissable chance to have your PC intone the line 'Get your stinking paws off me, you damn, dirty ape!'



Forbidden Zone: one for the purists

Tour diaries are a fixture of the superb official Supergrass site (***www.supergrass.com***) and you can 'interact' with Courtney Love if you so desire on the Hole message board (***www.holemusic.com***), although the tortuous registration will put off all but the most committed fans. Which may be the point.

But there is of course a more tragic element to the process. You suspect that Gary Numan (***www.numan.co.uk***) and the once-great Public Enemy (***www.publicenemy.com***) are terrific at penning pieces for their fans because media outlets have lost all interest. Gary Barlow – what are you waiting for?

***Planetside*: PS2's great hope**

GAMES

Gaming gets mobile at last

A new generation of games are coming to your phone – and some are just months away

Just as British mobile phone companies finally drag themselves into the halfway house of GPRS – faster than WAP, but not so you'd notice – Japanese phone companies have been test-launching proper third-generation mobiles with Web applications positively dripping off them. Right from launch, it's looking like this could be very good news for Japanese gamers – and for British gamers, once our slowcoach telcos catch up.

Japanese games giant Namco has already confirmed it is to develop full-colour downloadable phone versions of classic arcade games *Galaxian*, *Pac-Man* and, best of all, *Tekken*. Some of these will be playable across the Web against other phone users. Other classic games like Sega's retro duo *Sonic* and *NiGHTs* are to appear on handsets in the near future.

Some of the phone games could be played online

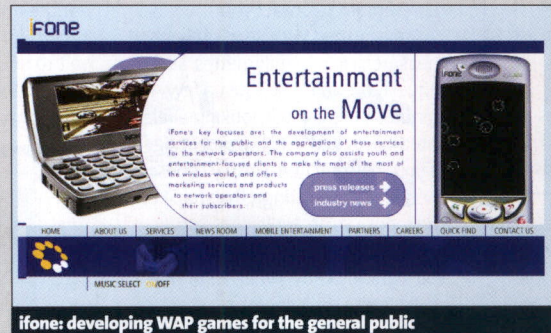
Of course, for those of us half a world away from Tokyo's hothouse of technology, downloadable colour games are still a way off, with best estimates putting the British third-generation phone launch sometime in late 2002. But Britain's mobile phone companies are finally starting to take advantage of the limited technology on offer here to create some decent games. Ludiwap, at ***www.ludiwap.com***, showcases some of the more interesting titles, with a WAP version of PlayStation spy thriller *In Cold Blood* on offer for free download. Later this autumn, Infogrames should be releasing downloadable black-and-white versions of old-school Atari arcade games including *Frogger*. Infogrames is currently in talks with ***www.ifone.com*** to finalise details about the downloads.

Meanwhile, British PC gamers continue to be deluged in online gaming treats, with this autumn seeing the launch of a twinned online pair of games: *Destroyer Command* and *Silent Hunter 2*. Players of either game can link up to the same servers, with *Destroyer Command* players ruling the waves in American destroyers groaning with depth charges, and *Silent Hunter 2* players cruising below in their U-boats.

PC developers are also becoming ever more clued-up about online extras, with the developers of this summer's real-world war gaming smash *Operation Flashpoint* offering new missions, new vehicles and new weaponry for free download through ***www.operationflashpoint.cz*** throughout the autumn.

As online gaming through the PC goes from strength to strength, the console big boys struggle to catch up. Sony has finally released the hard-drive/modem upgrade for PlayStation 2 over in Japan, priced at around £100, with *Final Fantasy 10* being one of the first games to take advantage. So far, no games have appeared with full online multiplay options, though. Web rumour has it that several titles will be up and running through the Net in the US, and possibly the UK, before the end of the year. The best hope so far is *Planetside*, which sounds like a fantastic role-player from the team behind *Everquest*.

Even the Microsoft boys behind the mighty Xbox are starting to develop jitters about their outspoken commitments to online gaming, blaming low uptake of broadband connections in Europe and even the US. The online component of Xbox gaming will roll out in the first half of 2002. A date for the UK launch has not been set. In fact, the only certainty is that us poor punters over in Europe are going to be the last people on Earth to get a taste of it.



ifone: developing WAP games for the general public

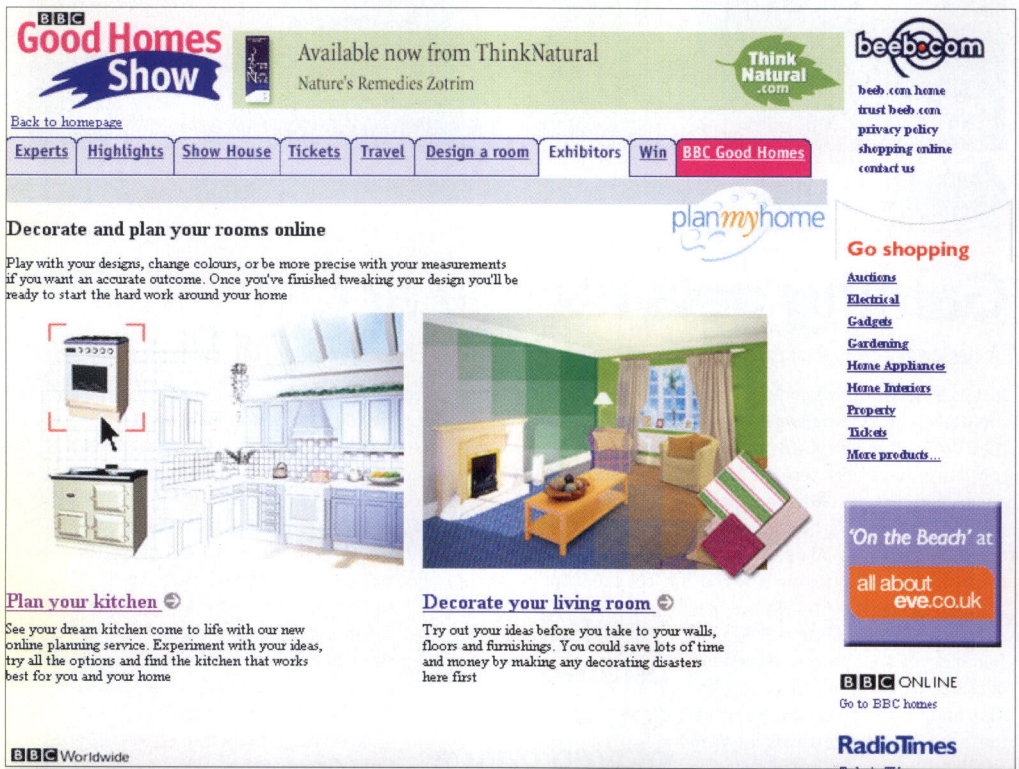
WORDS: DANNY GRAYDON (MOVIES), JOHN MULLEN (MUSIC), ROB WAUGH (GAMES)

what'snew»

The best new sites we've found – plus your picks

:// NEW SITES

Design your living room on the Net


BBC Good Homes Show
Available now from ThinkNatural
Nature's Remedies Zotrim
Think Natural .com
beeb.com
beeb.com home
trust beeb.com
privacy policy
shopping online
contact us
Back to homepage
Experts
Highlights
Show House
Tickets
Travel
Design a room
Exhibitors
Win
BBC Good Homes
planmyhome
Decorate and plan your rooms online
Play with your designs, change colours, or be more precise with your measurements if you want an accurate outcome. Once you've finished tweaking your design you'll be ready to start the hard work around your home
Go shopping
Auctions
Electrical
Gadgets
Gardening
Home Appliances
Home Interiors
Property
Tickets
More products...
'On the Beach' at
all about eve.co.uk
Plan your kitchen
See your dream kitchen come to life with our new online planning service. Experiment with your ideas, try all the options and find the kitchen that works best for you and your home
Decorate your living room
Try out your ideas before you take to your walls, floors and furnishings. You could save lots of time and money by making any decorating disasters here first
BBC ONLINE
Go to BBC homes
RadioTimes
BBC Worldwide

The BBC Good Homes Show virtual decorator: on-screen proof that violet walls would clash with lemon woodwork

REVIEWED

BBC Good Homes Show
www.goodhomes.beeb.com/show/content/design_room
Virtually decorate your living room or kitchen with minimum effort

Honourable Member
www.honourablemember.co.uk
Are you cunning enough to play the MPs at their own game?

Crowdsurfer
www.crowdsurfer.com
The latest news and reviews, free of faff and flannel

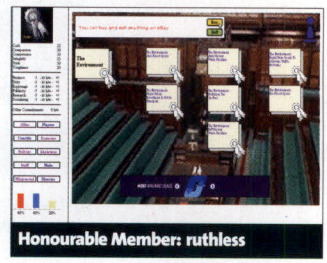
Go4awalk.com
www.go4awalk.com
Get back to nature with downloadable rambling trails

We think any device that saves time better spent elsewhere is worth having. So we loved the new software at the **BBC Good Homes Show** site (***www.goodhomes.beeb.com***) which allows you to decorate a virtual sitting room and have a go at planning a new kitchen without having to sit for hours watching someone else do it for you at the local showroom. Not that we'd want to do MFI a disservice, as their version of the programme, which appears alongside a generic one as a promotion for their own kitchens, provides even more styles to choose from and the option to have a representative contact you.

Arrive armed with your kitchen's measurements in millimetres, as requested, and it takes just a few minutes before you're looking at elevated views and a 3-D virtual image of your new kitchen. Simply choose the style of the fittings, the shape of the room, which appliances you want and where you want them. You'll quickly know whether or not you want to start again.

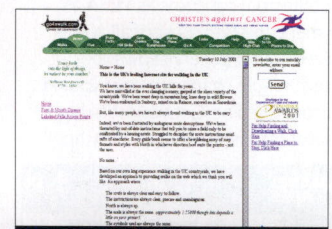
By decorating a virtual living room you'll be able to avoid the disappointment of finding out only after the event that your orange walls don't look so great with that mauve carpet after all. It's a bit more fiddly than the kitchen programme, but with a little patience, choosing colours for walls, ceiling, flooring, woodwork, upholstery, curtains and even the cushions, it will ensure that all your hard work will be rewarded with results you want to keep.

If the final Tory candidates want something to distract them as they wait to find out who the new party leader is, they might like to find out how their political skills measure up at the **Honourable Member** site (***www.honourablemember.co.uk***), a new online game in which the player is the backbench politician, the goal to bring his party to power with himself at the helm as Prime Minister.



Honourable Member: ruthless

As real-life MPs have shown us, getting to the top demands shrewd strategy and calculated moves. Just like real life, the policies you choose will affect how much compassion, competence, style and integrity the public thinks you have. There are allies to be made, and prizes for making them. Support the cause of foreign billionaire Mr Ali Baba, who desperately wants to be part of the British establishment, and you'll earn 20 cash points; if you're still friends with Lord Safebury at polling time, he could also do your finances a few favours. You can trade gossip and information with other players via a Web-based message system, and employ specialist researchers or even a private investigator to get you the information you need. Be prepared to face all sorts of ethical dilemmas as you try to progress, both professionally and socially – you'll have the skeletons in your closet exposed. Only the ruthless need apply. And remember, the best man probably won't win.



Go4awalk: wants you to take a hike

Maybe the people behind **Crowdsurfer** (***www.crowdsurfer.com***) couldn't get the staff. They claim they deliberately kept their site free of graphics, but it certainly helps to fulfil their aim of bringing readers 'all the stuff you want to know without the crap that you don't.' The 'stuff' is concise, focused but salty news and reviews from the worlds of music, movies and – refreshingly – literature, and the 'crap' any unnecessary waffle, with only tiny pictures used to add a bit of colour to the predominantly text-based site. The home page has new stories added every day: when we visited, at 3pm, the latest notices had been posted at 2pm and midday; yesterday's sat conveniently underneath. These included a reviews of US Bombs' live

Crowdsurfer: straight and to the point

London gig the previous night, four trailers for major forthcoming movies and news of a Waterstone's book signing event by *Fight Club* author Chuck Palahniuk.

All the articles are either short or even shorter, which means it takes only a minute to get clued up on the latest album releases or movie gossip. And where there's room, there's a liberal dose of strong but qualified opinion, particularly in the reviews pages, which also gives ratings and verdicts as a useful summary. Polls and quotes create neat but quick diversions. A useful source of entertainment news for anyone in a hurry, it includes a useful forwarding facility so it only takes seconds to email any of the articles to a friend.

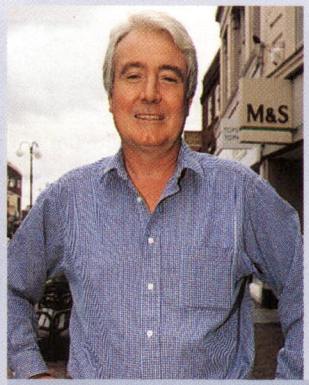
With the hype and hysteria of this year's foot and mouth crisis apparently now under control, walkers and ramblers are being allowed back on to more and more parts of the countryside. **Go4awalk.com** (***www.go4awalk.com***) is designed to help them make the most of this green and pleasant land by providing tried, tested and reliable walk routes all over the UK.

Choose the area of the UK you'd like to walk in – according to Ordance Survey maps, which you may already own, or by county or National Park – then click on the map area to choose from a selection of walks, colour coded and graded according to difficulty. If you're happy with the length, ascent and time of the walk, you then click through to download the full map and route details. All the maps include black place names which you can click on to view contact details for places to stay.

Walkers will also find lots of useful information, including a link to the Government's foot and mouth site for the latest news on rural restrictions. And for anyone using an Ordnance Survey map for the first time, the Navigation area provides an essential guide to the national grid and how to use a compass. Don't leave home without it.

Look what we've found!

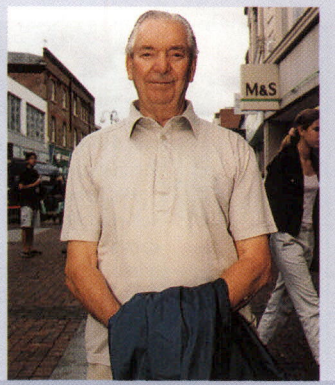
SILVER SURFERS Where does the mature generation surf to? We asked on the high street



KYLE FRASER

RETIRED

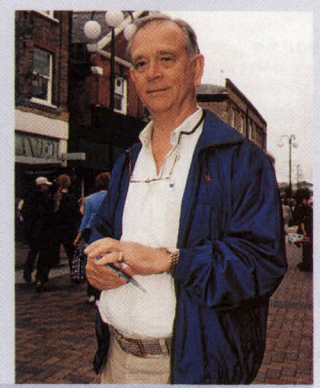
I use the Internet mainly for research, now that I'm a 'born again' student. I also use it for email as well as scientific purposes – I like the New Scientist site at ***www.newscientist.com***.



LESLIE HILLIAM

RETIRED

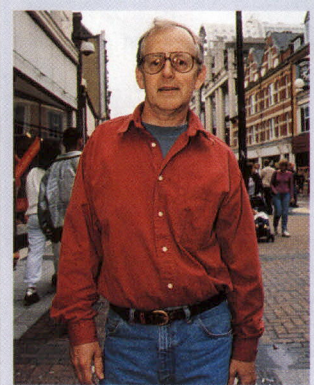
I check stocks, shares and their prices, and for that I'd normally go to the Advanced Financial Network (***www.advfn.com***). I also check my email and find information about travel and booking holidays online.



DEREK GREENLAND

BUSINESSMAN

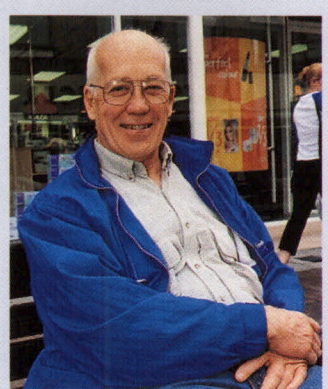
I have a business in Thailand, and so I mainly use the Internet for correspondence – I have a Hotmail account. I also look at financial services Web sites, such as ***www.fsa.gov.uk***.



GRAHAM WALKER

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

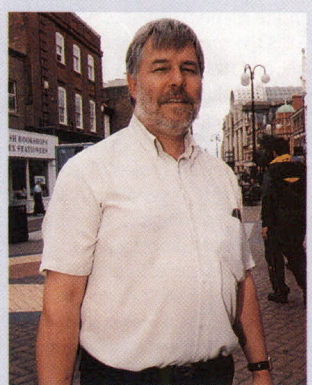
I look up travel information on hotels and airlines. I buy plane tickets online at sites like United Airlines at ***www.united.com*** and Air Canada at ***www.aircanada.com***.



JAMES RUSTON

RETIRED

I use the Net to find out about travel at a site like ***www.expedia.com***. When I get back to America I have to teach a class on art museums so I will be looking up information on that.



PHILLIP HOLT

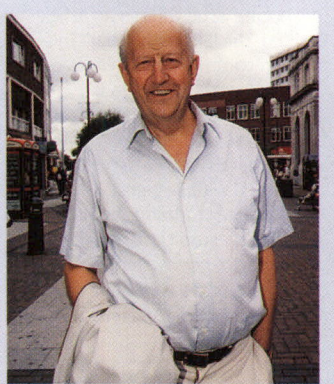
HYPNOTIST AND TRAINER

I'd have to say that I use the Net to access my site at ***www.stage hypnosis.uk.com***. I also use it for email and to make travel bookings. I like the BT site (***www.bt.com***).

BHART MATA

IT TECHNOLOGIST

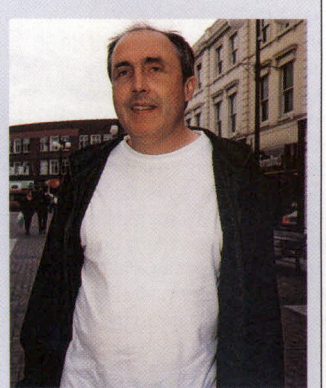
I use the Internet for lots of things; research, business, email, and checking stocks and shares. Overall, my favourite site is probably the Bank of England's at ***www.bankofengland.co.uk***.



JOHN CORSAN

RETIRED

I use the Internet for general information and also to research my family tree. I'm not yet on email. I think Yahoo!'s Web site (***www.yahoo.co.uk***) is the one that I use the most.



MICHAEL COLLINS

MATURE STUDENT

I mostly use the Internet to send emails, but I also use it to check what's going on in the stock market. My favourite site is Google (***www.google.co.uk***) which I use for research.

INTERVIEWS: DAN GRABHAM; PICTURES: RICHARD LAWRENCE

letters

Send your letters to: Inbox, *the net*, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE or email us at ***thenetnow@haynet.com***

Dear Sir

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I have just finished reading your article on online gaming (July issue), which finishes with 'Our choice of the best online games around'. While I appreciate that you cannot have this choice dominated by the hugely popular FPS (First Person Shooter) games – which are without doubt the most popular games on the Net – you seem to ignore several titans of the online arena.

Firstly, focusing on FPSs, I was amazed to find you hadn't included *Unreal Tournament*. I know it was briefly mentioned in the article, but it is just as popular as *Quake 3 Arena*, and it had 3600-plus servers the last time I checked. How can this be overlooked in the 'choice' when games like *1NSANE* are included? It is fitting to mention that *Counter-Strike* is the most popular online game, and has been since it was in the middle of its beta versions.

Secondly, regarding your choice of RTSs (Real-Time Strategies), how can you ignore *Age of Empires II*? It frustrates me that people with little or no online gaming experience are being lead to mediocre games.

There is one game that does not really fit into any category: *Planetarion* (***www.planetarion.com***). This is a free, browser-based game. These two things alone should afford it a mention in your listings. People who are not familiar with online games and want to dabble in something cheap and affordable should be pointed towards games like this instead.

Tom Blomfield, via email

Dear Sir

Following your write-up and ISP of the Year award to BigBlueSky (***www.bigbluesky.uk.net***) I am not very impressed. I did have some success at accessing the service in the beginning, although it took 50 tries to authenticate. When I contacted BigBlueSky by phone, it claimed that engineers were working on the problem, and that it would be fixed in three days. Eventually, I sent a letter and then a fax to the MD asking for a refund. Now I have no access at all and what's more, no £25 refund. Clients would not expect first time connection at this price, but they do expect something.

Alan Cooper, via email

Dear Sir

In the June issue you ran an article entitled 'The ISPs of the year'. This article recommended BigBlueSky as 'best for budget'. I read your appraisal and explored the site. I felt this ISP would suit both my purse and my needs. I typed in my details and parted with £25, since which I have not heard a thing. It's all looking a bit suspicious, wouldn't you say? I am now seriously concerned for the welfare of my £25.

Madeleine Browne, via email

*These are just two of the many emails – and letters – we've received on the subject of BigBlueSky. Unfortunately, BigBlueSky joined the long list of unmetered Internet access casualties at the beginning of July, after we went to press. The company blamed BT for its troubles, claiming that it had 'fought with BT with regard to connectivity problems'. BT retorted in a statement that it was 'disappointed and angered' by BigBlueSky's claims, and said: 'It is only too easy to blame others... when a company's business model is simply not robust enough to succeed in this intensely competitive marketplace.' There's more information on complaining about an ISP at Oftel's Web site at (**www.oftel.gov.uk**) or in our article on p28. Sometimes, a lot can happen in few weeks on the Net, which means that previously reliable companies experience potentially disastrous problems, but by keeping the letters coming you can at least keep readers informed.*

A reader rants

Broadband: a consumerist rat race

I write with increasing frustration at articles like Tim Richardson's Opinion on 'The Broadband Myth'.

His approach to broadband smacks of the same self-righteous preachings users endured during the campaign for unmetered calls – which has created an economy where people are encouraged to pay for a standard connection charge they may never actually use fully. For example, before unmetered access, I signed on with Virgin.net and paid less in quarterly call charges than I currently do with my total Off Peak Freeserve Time and BT charges.

Worse still, the 'unmetered calls' campaign was preceded by a similar campaign for faster modem access – all the while, increasing the costs that users have to pay in order to gain the mythical 'faster access'. Point in case: my first PC came with a 33.6Kb modem, which served me remarkably well until 56kb devices came along, whereupon I upgraded, only to discover that I had gained virtually nothing in terms of Internet download speeds.

Broadband News: keep up to date

When a widespread broadband Britain finally sees the light of day, users will be expected to pay even more money, but will no doubt discover all too late that they have been labouring under a misapprehension. Faster is not better, it just means you spend more cash.

I object to being encouraged to join this consumerist rat-race. Broadband is indeed a myth.

Martin Conaghan, via email

Martin, you've missed out one important benefit: convenience. Broadband is a significant step forward and will be genuinely quicker – keep up with the latest news at ***www.broadband-news.co.uk****.*

Dear Sir

Tim Richardson's column 'The Broadband Myth' was, among many other articles, of great interest to me. I live in London, one of the largest cities in the world, and am an NTL (***www.ntl.com***) customer.

You see, my problem is that I cannot trust NTL advertising. This is because NTL inherited me by buying Cable and Wireless, who in turn had inherited me from Videotron.

Every time I ring up about C&W's... oops, sorry, I mean NTL's Internet services, I am told it is not available in my area. When the company launched NTL World they even sent me a little box, knowing that I could not use it with my NTL line. It is now happening again with cable modems which are offered at an excellent price in the city in which I work, Cambridge. By NTL.

Every time I ask NTL the answer is no. No plans. No timescale. There are plenty of other providers offering ADSL, sometimes at only twice the price of NTL's cable modems. But you need a BT line.

I am very pleased that NTL is spending millions of pounds on advertising the benefits of broadband. I only wish it could spend that kind of money offering it to people like me.

Jim Kelleher, via email

WINE FOR WORDS!

The writer of Letter of the Month wins a case of fine wine from Rouge-Blanc.com, the award-winning Web site bringing 'Calais prices' to your door.

WHO WE ARE **For main contact details, see page 3**

the net, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE, United Kingdom
Email ***thenetnow@haynet.com*** **Phone** 020 8267 5000 **Editorial** 020 8267 5870 **Advertising** 020 8267 5015 **Subscriptions** 01795 414807 **Fax Advertising** 020 8943 5815 **Fax Editorial** 020 8943 5819

CONTRIBUTORS Steve Clemens, Danny Graydon, David Hurst, Andy Hutchinson, Peter Liddiard, Shaun Marin, Claire McHattie, Ben Oliver, Steve Orino, Sarah Ramsden, Chris Rennie, Tim Richardson, David Semple, David Sharp, Rob Waugh, Nick Wright **Editorial Secretary** Hazel van Wieringen THANKS TO... Danielle Colaco, Sue Copeman, Peter Crush, Andy Howes, Yasmine Valizadeh, Jason Venkatasamy ADVERTISING **Group Ad Manager** Rachael Coles **Ad Manager** John Burke **Classified Sales** Gurbir Phull **Special Projects Manager** Martyn Jones **Secretary** Kate Collins PRODUCTION **Group Production Manager** Darren Jones **Production Controller** Jason Kerrigan THE MANAGEMENT **Publisher** Sian Rees **Publishing Manager** Robert Frumkin **Head of Trade Marketing** Sarah Magraw **Group Subs Manager** Abby Payton **Editorial Director** Mel Nichols **Design Director** Paul Harpin **Finance Director** Brian Freeman **Managing Director** Kevin Costello **Chairman** Eric Verdon Roe

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One in a million

BANANALOTTO ***www.bananalotto.co.uk*** Who wants to be a millionaire? We all do…

:BANANALOTTO

WHAT IS IT?
Free daily lottery game promising payouts of up to £1million for matching numbers

LAUNCHED
July 2000

TRAFFIC
570,000 registered users with over 40,000 playing in an average day. Among the top 30 most popular sites in the UK

BASE
London/Paris

KEY FEATURES
Daily lottery game with £1million jackpot: users choose their numbers and then click on a banner ad to enter

EVERY DAY, TENS OF THOUSANDS of Brits punch seven numbers into a garishly-designed Web site, cross their fingers and hope to become millionaires. Bananalotto, the site behind the craze, hasn't quite made anyone's dreams come true yet (three payouts of £100,000 are the biggest windfalls to date) but the pursuit of free money online is fast becoming a national obsession.

In fact, the unassuming folk behind Bananalotto have seen their protégé creep almost unnoticed into the top 10 UK site lists on a pretty regular basis, nestling nicely between the likes of AOL and Excite: since its launch last summer, over half a million people have registered to play this free cyber-lottery, and an average of 40,000 virtual game cards are completed every day.

Even among a nation of gamblers, such figures are huge, especially when you consider the site has prospered with the bare minimum of advertising and promotion – word of mouth has propelled it to popularity. At a time when most new online businesses are reaching for the nearest revolver, Bananalotto has astounded the pundits by delivering consistently solid revenue and traffic figures despite not charging its users a penny.

Maybe it takes a Frenchman to show us Brits how to run a dot com. Bananalotto (the name's 'distinctive and fun' apparently) is the brainchild of Guilleume Multrier, a financier who watched the success of American ventures like Freelotto (***www.freelotto.com***) and MinuteLotto (***www.minutelotto.com***) with interest and spotted a gap in the European market for a similar service. He launched the site simultaneously on both sides of the Channel with a ridiculously simple premise: after filling in a small registration form, users pick six numbers from a grid of 49, plus one Banana Number (similar to the National Lottery's Bonus Ball). Click on a banner ad, wait for a few seconds and you've entered – matching six numbers and the Banana Number pays out a cool £1 million, with prizes ranging down to 50p for three matches. The odds of 89 million to one on picking up the jackpot are daunting even in lottery terms, but that hasn't stopped the visitors rolling in (360,000 of them have picked up a prize of some description).

'We knew we'd be a popular site, but people keep coming back,' says Bananalotto MD James Eadie. 'They get used to picking their numbers at a certain time each day; we seem to have captured the imagination. It's a bit of fun, it's free and you can do it every day. A lot of companies have fallen foul of trying to charge for a subscription. Clicking on a banner instead is painless and people seem to like it. We don't pretend to compete with the likes of the National Lottery.'

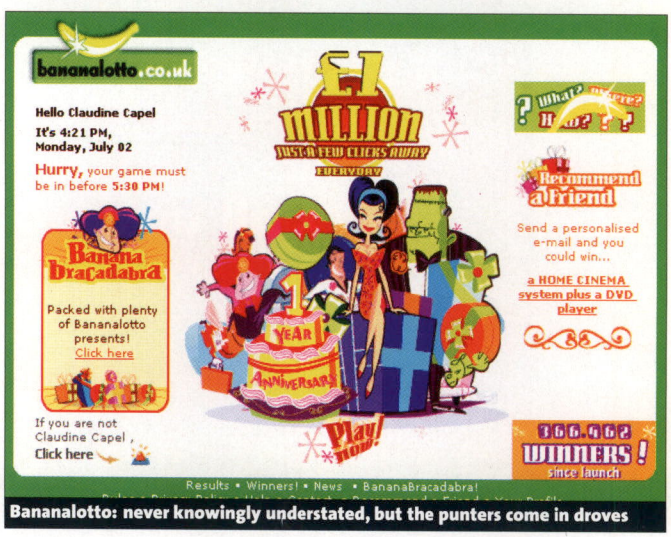
The Bananalotto model, however, is remarkably similar to Camelot's version when it comes to picking those magic numbers. As the contest closes at 5.30pm every day, details of visitors and their numbers are burned onto a CD-ROM which is taken to a room in the site's Paris HQ. There, an independent adjudicator watches as 49 balls are placed in a bag and drawn – Bananalotto considers this method more 'foolproof' than any sort of digital draw.

The future, then, looks bright for the cyber fruit fans, with plans afoot for expansion into Europe and possibly Asia, in addition to the possibility of new lottery-style games, including SMS and WAP offerings.

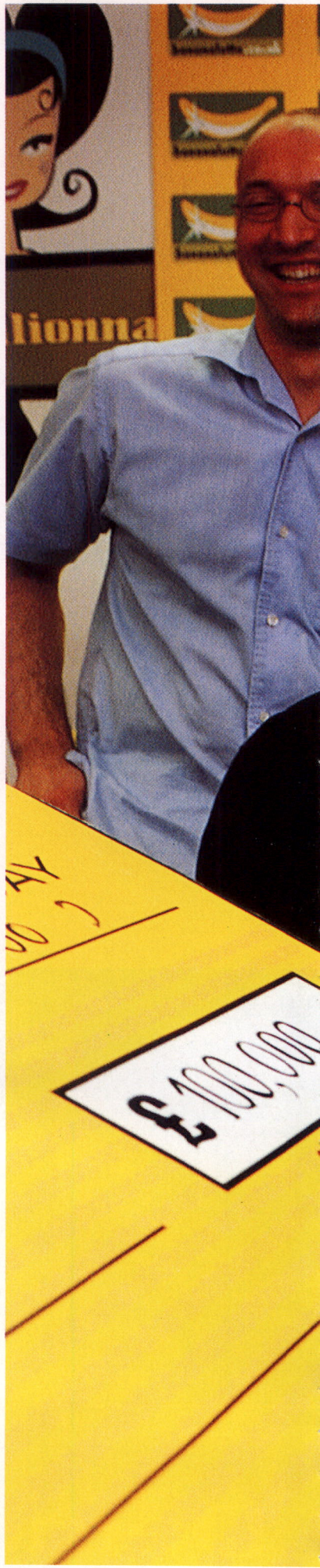
'It's fun and it's free. We'd love to make a millionaire' – James Eadie

Despite the banner ad market upon which the site so relies heavily going into freefall, Eadie insists ad revenues aren't a problem. 'We're guaranteeing advertisers traffic, and despite the current climate people are getting good results from us.'

Eadie remains upbeat even with the potential bananaskin of a first-ever £1million payout a distinct possibility. 'We'd love to make a millionaire,' he insists. 'Really...'



Bananalotto: never knowingly understated, but the punters come in droves



The Banana bunch: it's all smiles on millionaire's row

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURE: RICHARD LAWRENCE

FOOTBALL GEAR SHOPPING ONLINE

We have kick off

Look like a football pro without being paid like one

As the nation's teams take to the pitch once more this August, fans everywhere will want to don some new kit and enjoy their own games, too. And when it comes to good value clothing and equipment, the Internet made for some pretty rich pickings when we visited.

Pendle Sportswear's site at ***www.footballkit.co.uk*** featured a shirt in the style of crack Italian outfit Napoli: among the best deals we found for basic kit, at just £10.65 for a 38-40 inch chest. Matching shorts were only £5.65, and more elaborate designs only £2-£3 more. The limited accessories and equipment were mainly Pendle's own, but the Mitre footballs and the goalkeeper gloves (£14.95) were competitively priced.

Pendle's site offered to customise kit with numbers or logos, though we couldn't get the relevant pages to work. More efficient was Petche (***www.petche.co.uk***), which charged £1.50 per number. This range was more limited but still attractive, and the price-list happily non-sizeist: £14 for all Premier range shirts and £8 for shorts. The traditional-style Club range was a couple of pounds less.

The kit at Sports Retailers (***www.sportsretailers.co.uk***) was a bit pricier than we found elsewhere. Indeed the best deals were for the officials: in addition to an extensive range of ref's whistles starting at just 49 pence (for which the postage charge was a ridiculous £2), there were red and yellow cards for £3.49 and the entire outfit – available in any colour, as long as it's black – totalling less than £30. Footballs were fairly reasonable, too, with the Mitre Ultimatch priced at £16.95.

For those who like to play wearing their favourite team's strip, we found several sites offering fair deals. But nowhere did we find the new Manchester United home shirt cheaper than at Sportsmart (***www.sportsmart.co.uk***), where it cost just £27.95, though the limited selection of other shirts were nearer the average £40.

The biggest selection of replica strip was at Kitbag.com (***www.kitbag.com***), which was in a different league to the other sites we explored, both in terms of navigation and content. Although most current shirts cost £39.99 (the Man U home shirt was £34.99), where Kitbag really scored was with its enormous range of retro shirts, all at £34.99. Fair-priced top-brand balls, bags and goalkeeper's gloves dominated the equipment areas.

Looking smart in your new kit won't do you any good if you haven't got balls – or one ball, at any rate. Stadium Intersport (***www.intersport-direct.com***) has only a small selection but some good prices, such as the Mitre Ultimatch football for £14.99 – almost £2 cheaper than at Sports Retailers – and the Mitre Tactic for just £9.99. Other bargains were a full-size extra-heavy goal net at £130 and a set of flexible corner posts for £24, made all the more reasonable by 'free' postage and packing.

Newitts (***www.newitts.com***) was another site whose prices included P&P, and it was here that we came across the best bargains for balls, and a huge selection to boot. The Mitre page alone showed 28 different balls, with the Ultimatch over £5 cheaper than at Stadium Intersport and the Ultimax an amazing £18 cheaper than at Sports Retailers. Newitts was also the best site for boots, and at a quick glance clothing, too, seemed reasonable, as did accessories.

Footballmad (***www.footballmadshop.co.uk***) is worth considering if you want the same boots as the pros, though with Adidas Copa Mundials at £79.99 and Puma Kings at £99.99, prices were top-range, too. The Selsport goalie gloves are a better deal, and given that postage was free, it's also worth coming here for the wide selection of replica Premiership shirts if yours is out of stock elsewhere.

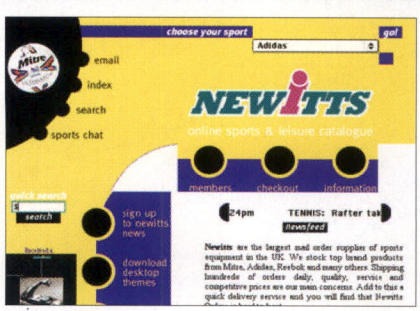
Ray Taylor (***www.footballsouvenirs.co.uk***) had some hidden bargains in training equipment. Though this cheap and cheerful site dealt mainly in cheesy souvenirs, we found a ref's wallet and cards, including score sheet, for just £2, a handpump for £4.50 and a match-weight Westham football at £7.

Online sports superstore Sweatband (***www.sweatband.com***) offered a good selection of specialist football accessories, including four types of boot stud, plastic Fasclips to secure goal netting (£15.50), and a Mitre ball pressure gauge (£10.50). More familiar items were reasonably priced – a 12' x 6' portable mini goal was £120, a Mitre double-action ball pump £7.50 and Nike clothes, including Match Ultraccel boots at £35, seemed good value, too.

Shopping online for your kit means more time on the pitch, or watc hing at home, and if you pick the right sites for the best deals and you'll already be on to a winner...

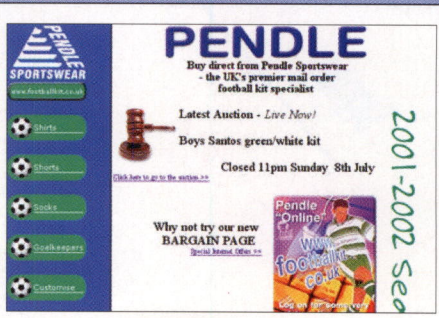
REF'S CARDS AND WHISTLES FROM 49p
www.sportsretailers.co.uk
All the discerning referee needs to keep order on the pitch.

;-) Our top football kit sites



NEWITTS
www.newitts.com ★★★★★
More balls than most; Newitts' prices, as well as the sheer range of products, were unbeatable.

KITBAG.COM
www.kitbag.com ★★★★
The sportswear giant came up trumps with replica kit, for both new season and retro styles.



PENDLE SPORTSWEAR
www.footballkit.co.uk ★★★★
Excellent value customisable kit and budget accessories, though online shopping was tricky.

WORDS: ALEX NEWBY; PICTURES: CHRIS RENNIE

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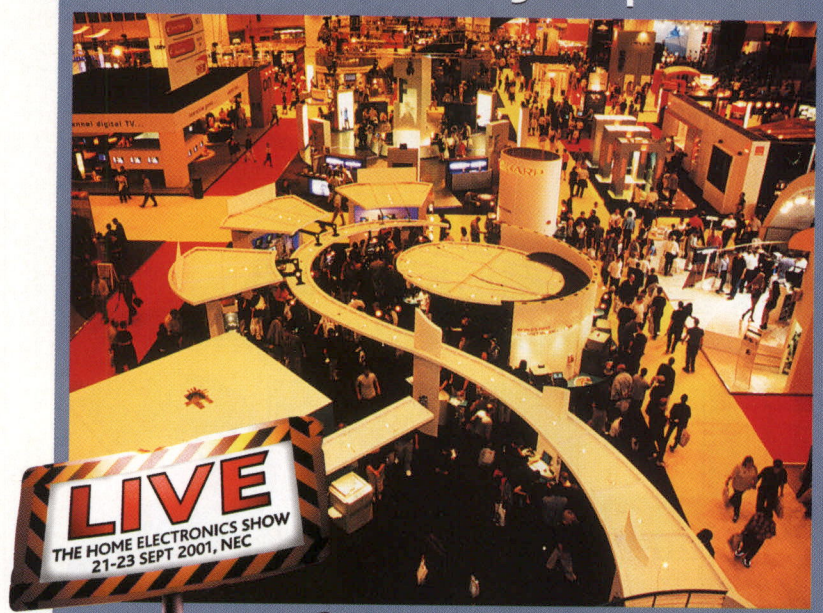

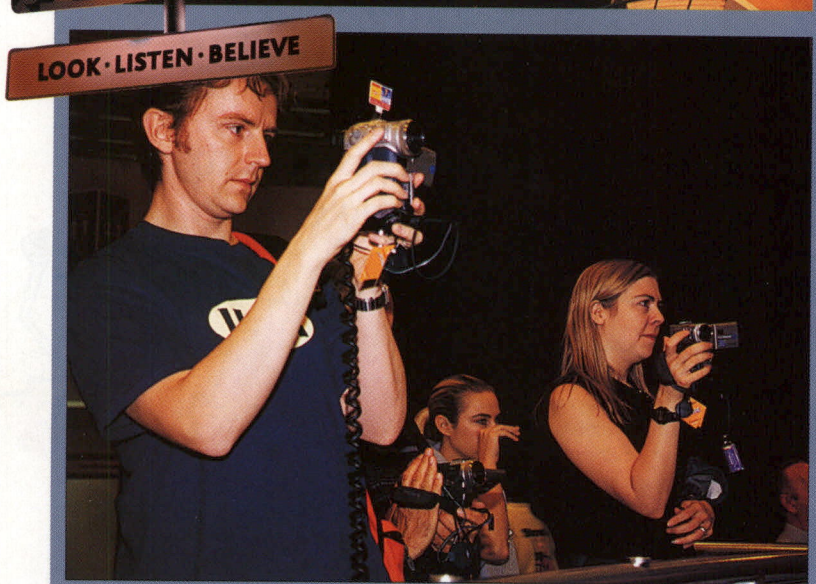

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

People have the power in cyberspace – whether you want to bash an ISP or protect your privacy, here's your online charter

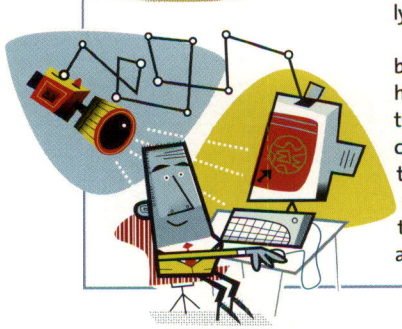
MOST OF US DON'T DOUBT THAT THE advent of the Internet has been an Extremely Good Thing for the consumer. It's driven down prices across the board and allowed global interconnectivity on a scale we could only ever dream of.

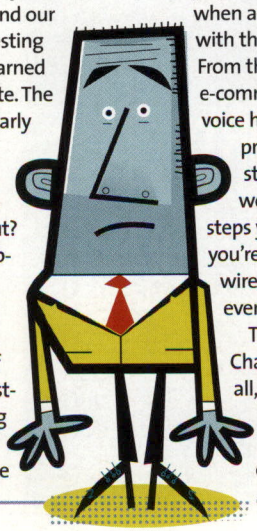
The problem with new technology, however, is that few of us really understand how it all works. We send our details off into the ether, investing our dreams – and our hard-earned cash – in a name on a Web site. The Internet delivers just as regularly as the offline world, if not more so – but if things go wrong, how many of us really know how to sort them out?

We all know that if our rubbish isn't picked up, we can harangue the council. If the trains don't run on time, we can write to the watchdog. If the builders are more interested in brewing up than fixing the roof, Trading Standards are but a call away. The online world, however, has a different set of rules and values in place which we haven't had time to learn yet.

That's why we've picked four of the most common areas of confusion on the Web and attempted to clarify your rights in each, pointing you to the people and places you need to fight your corner when and if you're not satisifed with the way you've been treated. From the potential pitfalls of e-commerce to making your voice heard with your ISP, from protecting your privacy to stopping spam in its tracks, we've highlighted positive steps you can take to ensure you're as empowered in the wired world as you are in your everyday life.

Think of it as a Netizen's Charter for online life. After all, the Web was always supposed to be about letting the little guy stand on his own two feet...





WORDS: ANDY HUTCHINSON ; ILLUSTRATIONS: DAVID SEMPLE

ISPs

Few could have envisaged the way that simple Internet provision has evolved into a minefield of different tariffs and a myriad of companies all promising the earth but often failing to deliver. Sure there are some excellent ISPs out there too, but we've seen far too many fly-by-night companies who have taken the subscription money and offered nothing in return beyond near-constant engaged tones.

One of the most common problems people have with ISPs is simple inability to access the Internet via their dial-up. This is nearly always down to over-subscription – pure and simple. For instance, one ISP which recently suffered a nasty meltdown offered 24/7 access for just £35 a year. That sort of pricing attracted a large number of people, many of whom never managed to connect at all. So what can you do?

1 In the first instance you should always contact the ISP in question. Try a firm but fairly-worded email to start with, and if that doesn't work send them a polite and concise letter asking for a full refund. If your email and the letter don't work, try to phone them – but don't use the standard customer services line, though: go straight for the main office number, which should be located somewhere in the ISP's home page or accompanying literature.

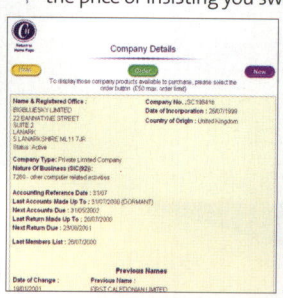
2 Many ISPs like to hide behind an anonymous Web site and keep their phone number and address secret, so how can you find them? Fortunately even the dodgiest of ISPs are registered with Companies House and you can track them down via the excellent Government-backed site at ***www.companies-house.gov.uk***.

3 If you're on a subscription-based payment scheme for your ISP then you'll certainly want to cancel that immediately. In the past we've found that some ISPs have carried on drawing funds from customer accounts even when they've folded – so never assume they'll automatically stop.

Don't think there's no need to complain if others have already

4 The next step is to get onto your local Trading Standards officer (***www.tradingstandards.gov.uk***) and notify them of your problems. The odds are that they'll have already received complaints from other people, but your grievance will only add weight to the argument, so don't assume there's no need. Contacting a site like ISP Review (***www.ispreview.co.uk***) will give credence to your complaint, as will getting in touch with the industry regulator Oftel (***www.oftel.gov.uk***).

5 If you've read through your contract and have spotted a few nasty clauses you hadn't previously noticed (because not everyone always reads the small print, after all) then don't panic. In 1994 the Government introduced the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations. According to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) Web site, illegal clauses include: terms which give the trader the right to vary the terms of the contract (for instance, by increasing the price or insisting you switch to a different tariff or option) without you having the right to withdraw; terms which allow the trader to dishonour promises; and terms which try to stop you being able to go to court over any dispute.



6 If you're intent on getting your money back then you'll probably have to pursue a claim through the small claims court. For a full and precise explanation of how this works check out the excellent Compact Law Web site (***www.compactlaw.co.uk/smc.html***). Always remember that there's strength in numbers, so if you can persuade other aggrieved consumers to join you, all the better. See you in court...

»

E-COMMERCE

Over the years we've heard all sorts of stern warnings about purchasing goods and services online. These are often from the same people who think nothing of sealing their most private thoughts and documents in bits of paper and dropping them in a box in the middle of a street. Yes, it's possible to get conned whilst shopping online, but it's certainly no dodgier than any other kind of shopping. The problem seems to be that many people throw caution to the wind when it comes to e-commerce. If a deal looks a bit suspect, then walk away – it probably is. When shopping, look for symbols like the Which? Webtrader sign. But what can you do if you've paid for goods that never arrived?

1 If you're shopping online, then the credit card is your friend. Why? Well according to Which? (***www.which.net***) 'If you buy goods costing between £100 and £30,000, the credit card issuer is jointly liable with the supplier for misrepresentation and breach of contract.' So if goods don't work or aren't delivered, you can pursue a claim against the card company instead of the Internet trader. You can also claim consequential loss costs from issuers – so if, say, a new microwave is faulty and sets fire to your kitchen, you can claim the cost of repairing the kitchen. You'll probably find that all it takes is one simple phone call to recoup your entire outlay.

One phone call should recoup your entire outlay

2 Pay close attention to your credit card bill and make sure that every listed entry is legitimate. Crooks often use credit card number generators to produce thousands of numbers at a time and they could easily have generated yours. Sometimes they use these numbers to make a series of micro-payments (£10 or £20), sometimes they make a few single large purchases. Consider how many £10 or £20 payments you regularly make on your credit card (subscriptions for instance) and then consider how easy it would be for a false one to slip through the net with a 'legitimate' name such as Discreet Bill. In 1998 an adult Web site company conned 700,000 American Visa card users out of a collective $40m using a similar micro-payment scam.

3 If you're buying goods from abroad then be aware you'll probably have to pay duty on them. Probably the best example of this is DVDs. Many people buy Region 1 DVDs from America so they can get films months before their European release. When they're delivered your postie will probably ask for about £7 to cover import duties – if you don't pay you don't get the DVD. So always consider that when you discover goods in American stores cost so much less than the same in the UK.

4 It might be electronic but there's still going to be a paper trail. Hang onto every email you receive from vendors and when you're actually purchasing goods online either print each page out or take a screenshot (alt+printscreen on the PC) so you've got proof of what took place, as well as making a note of order confirmation numbers and contact email addresses. You might also find it useful to phone a company to confirm receipt and delivery times if you're spending a substantial amount.

ONLINE SECURITY

Sitting in front of your computer in your own home using your own phone line it's easy to delude yourself that you're engaging in a private process. The fact is that using the Internet couldn't be more public if they installed CCTV cameras on the wall behind your PC. Whatever you do, however you do it, you leave a trail.

There are some fairly extreme steps you can take to protect yourself online. For instance, some people never enter personal information about themselves on sites for fear of it falling into the wrong hands. You should also be aware that many companies routinely spy on their employees' online activities – read your contract to see if you're being monitored.

Why worry about your privacy if you've got nothing to hide?

Why, though, should anyone worry about their privacy if they've got nothing to hide? For many, it's a simple point of principle. Others, however, are concerned about the implications of their personal details being covertly monitored by companies and the spam that follows: do you really want your address, age and purchasing preferences being passed around – with or without your consent?

1 Some people tag their address when supplying details online so they can trace the guilty party back to source. For instance, add a code of your own to your street address such as '14 Surbiton Road 24e'. The Post Office will still correctly deliver anything you order and if you keep a record of which site you entered which code into, you can prove that they've sold your details on and fire off a reprimanding email.

2 In this country you're protected by the Data Protection Act 1988. This applies to 'personal data': that is, data about identifiable living individuals. Those who decide how and why personal data is processed (the act calls them 'data controllers') must comply with the rules of good information handling. What this means is that among other useful requirements, they have to make sure it's secure, that it's not kept any longer than is strictly necessary and that it's accurate. If you find that the law's being flouted then you have a case in law and you can take – or threaten – legal action.

Download: a cookie-crusher

3 If you're worried about a particular site's trustworthiness, check to see if they have a privacy policy. This policy should outline the kind of information they will collect from you and what they will use it for. Think you're immune? In a recent survey only 9 percent of European Web sites asked permission before selling on details to third parties.

4 Cookies are useful bits of code generated by a Web server and stored in the user's computer, ready for future access. They can be used for useful stuff (like storing your site preferences) but these days they're often employed for tracking you. If you don't really want to be tracked online, download a program like Cookie Crusher (***www.download.com***). Alternatively, to find out more check out the excellent Cookie Central (***www.cookiecentral.com***).

5 Over the years we've seen some blindingly stupid mistakes from companies, including leaving a list of credit card details complete with customer names in a text file freely accessible online. Generally speaking if a site has bothered to set up a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) then you should be fine, but as always pay very close attention to your credit card bills. If you're still worried about a transaction or non-delivery, remember that any UK-based site you use is subject to the same laws and regulations as offline companies, so Trading Standards or the Consumers' Association will be able to step in on your behalf.

»

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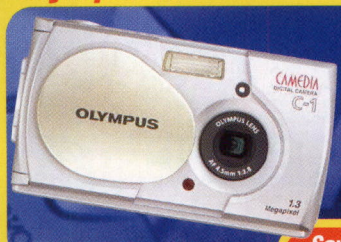

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This camera features a high quality 3x zoom lens with a 2.11 MegaPixel CCD and features an IrDA port for a wireless link

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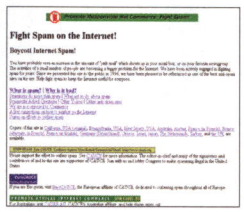
SPAM & ONLINE ADS

When you first get an email address you check it every five minutes to see if someone's sent you a message and if they have you're overjoyed. As you become used to email, however, you begin to realise that sometimes an empty inbox is a nice thing. This is especially true if you get a lot of spam filtering through your account.

In some ways online advertising is worse than spam because it sucks your bandwidth. Top of the list of advertising annoyances is the pop-up window – this is now the spam advertiser's frontline weapon. Nobody expects a free ride online, but the lengths some sites go to try to get your attention can be extremely irritating.



It doesn't matter how legimate it looks – delete it anyway

1 Without a doubt the most useful way to prevent spam is to use a separate email account specifically for online forms use. Sign up for an account at Hotmail or a similar Web-based service and create a new account. When you register for anything online (such as a forum) use this account – you can still check it for authentication emails and the like. If you find the site you've used is trustworthy you can always change your address to your main account. If you're as annoyed about spam emails as the rest of us , then why not be pro-active? Pay a visit to Spam Abuse (***uk.spam.abuse.net***) and you'll find out precisely how to deal with spam emails. There's an excellent tutorial on the site that explains how to find out who sent you the email (and no, it probably isn't the person in the 'From' line) and even includes a sample letter you can forward to the offending spammer's ISP.

2 It's virtually impossible to stop all spam emails from hitting your account, but you can filter them at your end. If you're using something like Outlook 2000 or Eudora, you can set up junk or adult email filters that automatically zap junk mail into the recycle bin.

3 Whatever you do, never ever email a spammer back. Quite often these people guess at email addresses and by replying you're merely confirming that the address is active and functional. And yes, that also applies to emails that have a 'click here to be removed from this list' link at the bottom.

4 To filter advertising out of Web pages, whether it just annoys you, or because you have young children surfing, get hold of WebWasher (***www.webwasher.com***) – see below for details.

5 Never ever forward on chain letters. It doesn't matter how legitimate it looks or what dire consequences will supposedly befall you – just delete it. Check out Break The Chain (***www.breakthechain.org***) for more information on the subject.

PROTECT PRIVACY AND STOP SPAM

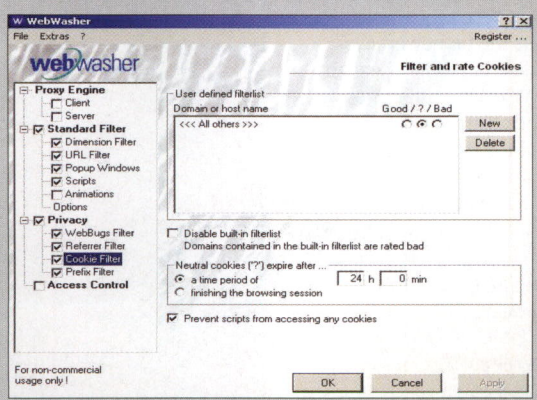
SOFTWARE THAT FIGHTS FOR YOU»

WEBWASHER

www.webwasher.com

The problem with protecting yourself online is that it often requires a suite of programs and a degree in computer science. WebWasher is a potential life-saver then, because it amalgamates various programs into one.

WebWasher is free and works by acting as a proxy server – it sits in between your Internet connection and your Web browser and intercepts everything that's passing between the two. It can stop pop-ups, filter out adverts, eradicate animations and filter URLs. From a privacy viewpoint, it can block referrer information and eradicate cookies.



COOKIE PAL

www.kburra.com

Easy to use and extremely effective, Cookie Pal is an essential tool for anyone concerned about privacy. When you visit a web site and it attempts to give you a cookie, you can either accept it or reject it. Cookie Pal also enables you to set up filters which allow certain sites full access to your cookie directory. And if you'd like your eyes opened about this problem, be sure to check out the cookie list, which displays all the cookies currently on your PC and where they're from. Could be very interesting...

Download a free 30-day trial version with the option to buy a full version for $15.

DON'T PANIC

www.panicware.com

If you're looking for more than a cookie cleaner, but are also aware of the fact that you may be being monitored by your employers, then Don't Panic is a good option.

Like Web Washer, Don't Panic can filter all your cookies, but it also does a very good job of cleaning up after you, by emptying all relevant caches and history directories. It includes pop-up window prevention and can be configured to run silently in the background. Costs $30 after a 30-day free trial.

MP3 on the run

MP3 can be part of your everyday life with the new world of music-friendly gadgets

IT'D TAKE A BOOK TO LIST IN FULL ALL the many and varied benefits of MP3. The ability to manage your music in seconds, picking and choosing the tracks you want, the chance to share sounds easily with friends and family and the convenience of smaller portables are just some of the reasons why the format has captured the public imagination.

There is, however, yet another reason why MP3 has taken off: its seamless integration into everyday products. Nobody in their right mind would try to add a tape deck to a mobile phone or a CD drive to a camera: the result would be ridiculously cumbersome and prohibitively expensive. Yet MP3's compressed digital nature makes it ideal for merging with existing hardware.

Since Samsung and Siemens produced the first MP3-enabled mobile phones back in March, manufacturers have been falling over themselves to follow suit, moving quickly from mobiles to cameras, car stereos and even headphones. The result is cutting-edge technology which looks great, saves you space and cash and maintains that all-important Wow! factor so important in the digital music world.

If money were no object, then, there'd be pretty much no portable gadget you couldn't wire up. In reality, however, you'll probably want to pick and choose the device which best suits you needs, be it the pocket picture-viewer-come-personal stereo or the all-in-one headphones. Whatever you choose, you'll experience all the benefits of two-in-one gadgetry without missing out on the sound quality or convenience of your existing portable. Here's hoping for an MP3 hat some time soon...

I&C MPMASTER £115

★★★☆☆

PROS All-in-one portable that's both cheap and convenient
CONS Only two basic control functions; no LCD

You've got to hand it to the Koreans: why bother attaching headphones to your existing MP3 player, they reason, when you can simply fit it all into the one headpiece? And why not throw in an FM radio into the bargain (though the quality of said extra isn't exactly mind-blowing)? Pioneering Far Eastern hardware manufacturer I&C, which seems to have been on an endless quest to make players smaller and lighter, has really excelled itself with the MPmaster, which offers quality playback in a great-looking and incredibly weightfree set of wraparound headphones. When you compress your players this far, however, you inevitably lose out somewhere, and sadly the MPmaster suffers from its lack of controls (there's Play, Fast Forward and, er, that's it...) and the complete absence of an LCD: don't underestimate how annoying it can be not to know what's coming next when you're ready to rock. Still, for sheer cutting-edge cool, this is difficult to beat...

MEMORY 32Mb with Mediacard
SUPPORTS MP3
CONNECTION USB
www.ickorea.com

IOMEGA HIPZIP £200

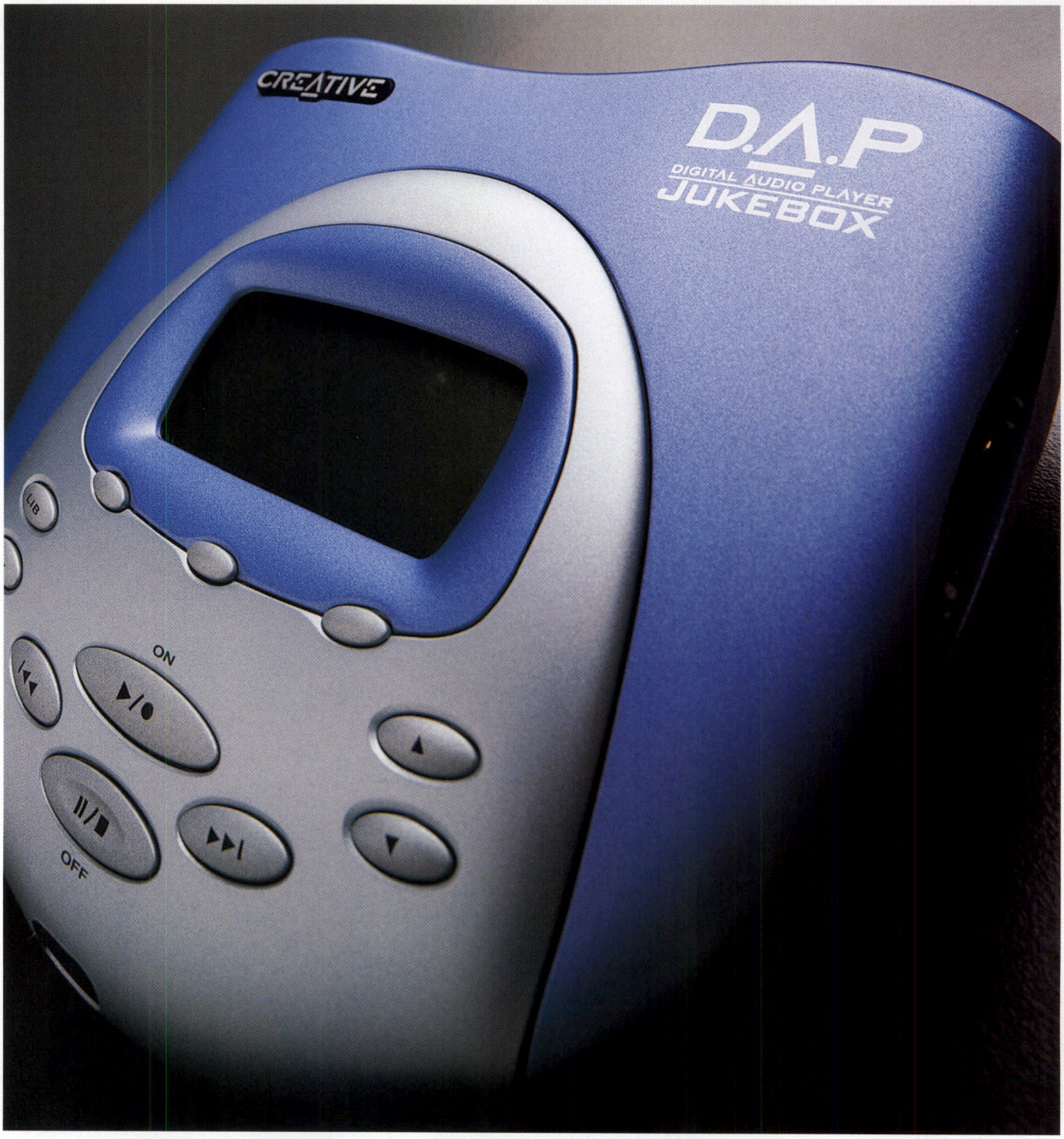
★★★★★

PROS A great, easy-to-use player which handily doubles as a portable storage unit
CONS Software isn't the easiest to use

Iomega, by day a specialist in Zip drives and data storage, may have unwittingly stumbled across the perfect excuse to get the office to pay for your digital music habit: the HipZip, you see, isn't just a great-looking and crystal clear MP3 portable. Oh no. It doubles as a Zip drive which can keep important files safe as you move around through its handy PocketZip disks, which each hold 40Mb of info. At £10 each, the disks are cost-efficient, eminently useable little add-ons which render boring, ordinary Zips redundant. While the software supplied isn't particularly simple to master, file transfer is lightning quick when you get underway; and though the HipZip isn't as light as other portables, it looks the business and is Mac-friendly. And £200 for such state-of-the-art sleekness is something of a steal. A must-have for the 'busy' young executive who can't do without a bit of Limp Bizkit with his tea.

MEMORY 40Mb per disk
SUPPORTS MP3, WMA
CONNECTION USB
www.iomega.com/europe

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY. PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT



CREATIVE DAP JUKEBOX

£280

★★★★★

PROS Simple to use; stores an entire CD collection in one small unit
CONS Bulky and power-hungry; not as cheap as a portable

If you're the kind of person who spent their formative years painstakingly organising their CD collection into alphabetical (or, even more disturbingly, chronological) order, you'll appreciate the categorical qualities at work in the ground-breaking DAP Jukebox. A year on from its launch, this is still by far the best all-round solution for the MP3 fanatic (or, indeed, the music-hungry office). With 6Gb of memory, you can hold up to 150 CDs' worth of MP3s here, ensuring that if you really do want to digitise your entire collection it won't be found wanting. Once you've uploaded your tracks – which, like the whole installation and music management process, is simplicity itself – you can alphabeticise them at the touch of a button to find the sounds you want in an instant, or randomise the database to create, well, a jukebox for home or office use. The sound is astoundingly clear and the interface simple; what's more, while the DAP is a lot bulkier than the average portable, anyone who's carried round a DiscMan will find the unit surprisingly manageable on the move, though obviously not ideal for the gym. The best bit, though, has yet to come: the DAP comes complete with access to downloadable upgrades from those lovely Creative types, which means that if a new format such as AAC eventually does to MP3 what the CD did to dusty old vinyl, you won't be left with an obsolete gadget. Cost-efficient, easy-to-use and always up-to-date: truly, a must-have for the music fan.

MEMORY 6gb
SUPPORTS All formats via downloadable upgrades
CONNECTION USB
europe.creative.com

SAMSUNG PHOTO YEPP £275

★★★☆☆

PROS Doubles as a picture viewer and MP3 portable; simple to set up
CONS Pricey; lacks memory

Portable music is a personal thing: while pop-loving teenagers might share round the headphones, most of prefer to listen alone, which is why multi-socketed personal stereos have long since died a death. The Photo Yepp, the latest in Samsing's line of innovative MP3 portables, is the perfect answer: while you listen to the latest sounds, those nearby can view pictures of your holiday on the player's handily-sized display. The Yepp displays .jpg files – or, if you'd rather, song lyrics – perfectly, and the sound's not bad either. But while this is a bold attempt at hi-tech gadgetry, there are a number of drawbacks: £275 is a lot of cash to spend for just 32Mb of memory (much of which, don't forget, will go on your photos, leaving less room for music). And with the soon-to-arrive Yepp Plus promising video playback and more memory, it might be worth keeping your cash in your pocket for the time being.

MEMORY 32Mb
SUPPORTS MP3
CONNECTION USB
www.samsung-europe.com

SONY CMD-MZ5 PRICES VARY ACCORDING TO CONTRACT

★★★★☆

PROS Lightweight, great-looking all-in-one phone
CONS Uploading music is time-consuming

Is it a phone? Is it an MP3 player? Actually, it's both, which is why Sony are heralding the state-of-the-art CMD-MZ5 as 'more than just a phone'. The first mobile to incorporate Sony's T9 technology to make SMS messaging a cinch, this little beauty is also the best MP3-enabled handset on the market, offering 64Mb worth of tunes and impressive sound quality via the slightly fiddly Memory Stick. The handset itself is designed wih convenience in mind, and couldn't be much easier to master. With a mobile now pretty much a modern essential, this is the best example of MP3 convergence we've yet come across.

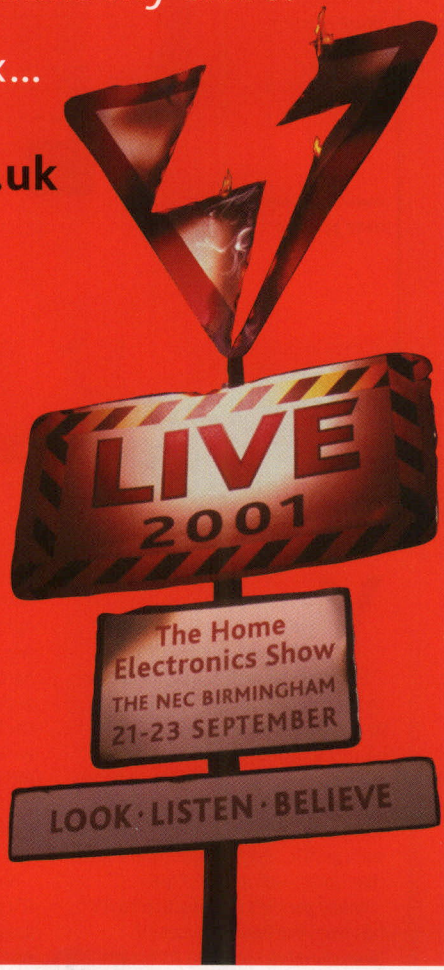
MEMORY 64Mb via Memory Stick
SUPPORTS MP3
CONNECTION USB
www.sony.co.uk

AUDIO • DVD • MP3 • DIGITAL • GAMES • INTERNET • MOBILE

PROTECT ME FROM MYSELF

I've had an excellent day. No seriously, you've shown me some really cool stuff and I need to buy everything. NOW. I can't wait to get to the shops, any one will do. You want my shirt? It's yours. Just tell me where I can buy that box...

Call now: 0870 902 0444 www.liveXpo.co.uk



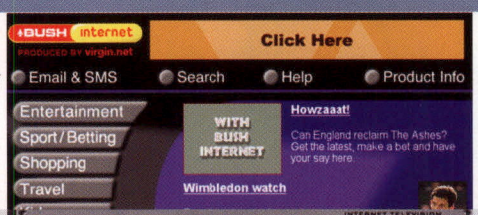
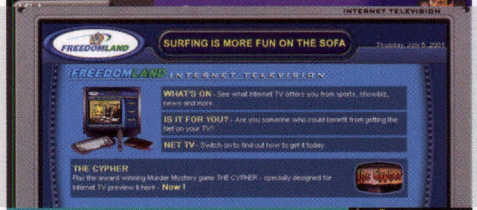
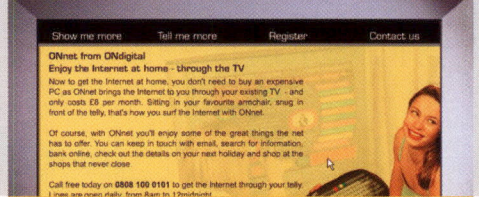
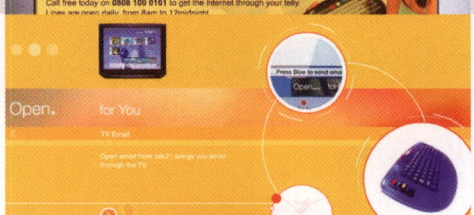
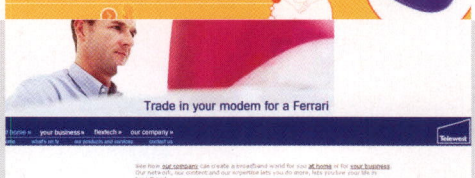
LIVE 2001
THE UK'S BIGGEST TECHNOLOGY AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT SHOW.
21-23 September NEC, Birmingham.

BOSE Better sound through research. orange SIEMENS UKonline KENWOOD NEW DURACELL ULTRA M3 digital radio tomorrow's wireless

Television will be

You've heard the hype about interactive TV. But what can it actually do?

THE MAIN INTERACTIVE TV SERVICES >>

NAME/URL/PHONE		WHO'S BEHIND IT?	HOW DOES IT WORK?
BUSH INTERNET ***www.bushinternet.co.uk*** ***0845 666 2222***		Bush, which produces the Internet TV, and Virgin Net, which produces the content for the portal site.	You can either buy an Internet-enabled TV from Bush or a set top box to go with your existing television. If you are purchasing just the box then your TV must have a Scart socket. It connects directly to your phone line.
FREEDOMLAND ***www.freedomland.co.uk*** ***0870 066 0575***		Freedomland is an Italian company which was established in 1999 and already has 130,000 subscribers in Europe.	Freedomland supplies you with a set top box which you plug in to your phone line and TV. The box contains a 56Kb modem and you'll get the obligatory wireless keyboard, too.
NTL ***www.ntl.com*** ***0800 052 1815***		NTL Interactive launched in March 1999. Backed by Tesco, ITN, Beeb.com and the Electronic Telegraph among others.	NTL iTV is available through an NTL set top box which works via the company's digital cable service. Viewers can continue to watch TV while using the iTV services and won't have to clog up their phone line while they're using the service, either.
ONDIGITAL ***www.onnet.co.uk*** ***0808 1000101***		It's backed by both major players of the ITV network, Granada and Carlton. It will be renamed ITV Digital in the near future.	ONdigital uses a terrestrial digital set top box. This connects into your phone line as well as your normal rooftop aerial. ONnet, ONdigital's Internet arm, needs an extra box to go on top of your set top box – work out your own name for that one...
OPEN ***www.open-here.co.uk*** ***0207 332 7196***		The company has been going since 1996, backed by BT, HSBC, Matsushita and, unsurprisingly, BSkyB.	Open brings 'interactive services' into your home via your digital satellite receiver – ie Sky Digital (***www.skynow.com***). The receiver also connects to your phone line.
TELEWEST ***www.telewest.com*** ***0800 953 5383***		Cable giant Telewest first launched its iTV service in March 2001.	Telewest calls iTV 'Active Digital' and there's access to a closed loop of 150 sites. You'll have to pay £19.99 extra if you want an infrared keyboard, though.

WORDS: DAN GRABHAM; PICTURE: GRANADAMEDIA

You surf the Internet at work, on your laptop and even on your mobile phone. But what about on your TV?

Enter interactive TV (iTV), which is being heralded as the cheapest way to get online: no expensive PC needed, just a connection and your existing set. Currently, iTV services can be split into two different categories: services that let you surf the Web, such as NTL and Telewest , and those that don't, such as Sky's Open.

Many people's introduction to iTV has been the Bush Internet TV (***www.bushinternet.com***). Although Bush's portal isn't exactly brimming with content, the Internet TV has the right idea as it lets you surf the whole of the Web. Bush has worked hard on the products, releasing several different models of 'the set with the Net' from a 14" screen to a 28" widescreen version for around £500. Although you'll need good eyes if you want to send email on the small version, it's a budget way to get the Net without subscription.

Satellite pioneer Sky has been an iTV player for some time with Open, its collection of 'interactive services'. As Open's own site states, 'Open is not the Internet on TV'. You don't have to be online to access Open, but when you shop for a product the set top box (your digital satellite receiver in other words) will connect to the Net, at which point you begin to pay local call charges. Helpfully, Open show a telephone symbol on the screen at this point, so you'll always know when you're online.

One of the new iTV players is Freedomland (***www.freedomland.co.uk***). Although the company originally started in Italy, it hopes to have 100,000 UK-based subscribers by the end of the year. What's clever about Freedomland's iTV service is that you can still watch TV while connecting to the Net: the Freedomland interface frames the TV picture, so the wait for your modem to connect won't be too painful, as you can still watch Jack and Vera while you wait.

EMAIL ON YOUR TELLY

Email is iTV's main selling point to non-PC owners. (Freedomland is also planning to build SMS capabilities into its email; Bush Internet already has.) Note that with many iTV email services you have to be online while you type your email.

revolutionised

Is it any use? And how much is it? We look at the services on offer

WHAT DOES IT DO?	HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?	PROS AND CONS
The Bush Internet content is produced by Virgin Net and as well as everything from Entertainment to News and Weather also allows users to access their Bush email and SMS account. You can surf all the Web using the keyboard provided.	You can buy the 14" Bush Internet TV from most high street electrical retailers for under £100 or a set top box for somewhere in the region of £50-60. There are other, larger, sizes available, too. You'll also have to pay the cost of a local call for Internet access.	**Pros:** Cheap, SMS compatible. **Cons:** Slow and not future-proof.
Freedomland has all the usual iTV features such as a shopping square and email (soon to have SMS capability) but puts them inside a unique 'frame' around a reduced-size television screen so you can navigate the display and connect to the Net while you're still watching TV.	**£6.99 per month. The set top box is free. Again, you'll have to pay the local calls for Net access.**	**Pros: Easy to carry on watching TV at the same time, full Internet capability.** **Cons: £6.99 for iTV on its own.**
NTL interactive offers news, sport, entertainment and home shopping plus local information. NTL uses lots of partners, meaning that the service has a wide variety of different content.	You pay £14.99 subscription per month but this is inclusive of the line rental on your phone.	**Pros:** Fast cable access, local information. **Cons:** You have to be in an NTL cabled area.
ONnet allows you to send emails (including attachments such as pictures and video stills). You can also surf the Internet using a 56k modem built into the ONnet box. There's also a wireless keyboard included in the package.	**It's free with an ONdigital Internet package, which includes a year's subscription to six primary ONdigital channels. You will have to pay local rate calls. You can also subscribe to ONnet alone for £8 per month.**	**Pros: Free with your ONdigital subscription, keyboard included.** **Cons: It's a lot extra if you've already got ONdigital.**
Other features include a shopping portal. Several companies have been successful with it. Shops include Woolworths Secure shopping system with transactions handled by HSBC.	The service is free with a Sky Digital subscription and all set top boxes are pre-configured. Again, you'll pay local rate calls when connected to the Internet.	**Pros:** Excellent shopping portal, set top boxes pre-configured. **Cons:** No Internet.
The service carries various shopping and banking services – you can order pizza delivery from Domino's (very popular, that one) or flowers from Interflora. You can also play interactive games and quizzes plus you can send email, too.	**Digital TV and phone packages are priced from £9.60 to £24 per month depending on how many channels you want. Connection is £30.**	**Pros: Cable access, included with phone and TV package.** **Cons: Expensive connection charge.**

The problem with the medium is that a television lacks the definition of a computer monitor. Freedomland CEO Simon Mellinger has called for the 're-purposing' of sites for iTV; one company that has made a success of this is Tesco. You can visit Tesco's iTV Access service from anywhere at ***www.tesco.com/access***. Tesco already has links to the Access service from both Freedomland and Bush Internet.

OTHER USES FOR iTV

Freedomland has also explored other ways to use the medium. It's launched an interactive soap opera *Beverley's Diary* plus a murder mystery game *The Cypher*. Freedomland also has chat and forums, plus an online dating service. NTL provided the first iTV service in the UK and as the Net connection is through their cable network, it's pretty fast, too.

But iTV isn't all about entertainment, news, email and shopping. Telewest has joined forces with Opta (***www.opta.com***) to launch a new iTV service called 'Living Health', backed by the NHS and currently undergoing a six-month trial in Birmingham. The service provides health information and advice; a nurse is also on hand to give round-the-clock advice. The service will allow patients to find local health facilities and will even enable them to book a doctor's appointment.

iTV has the potential to be a very useful and accessible medium, but still has to demonstrate that it has the capability to please a mass audience, especially for the 'walled garden' content-based services which don't allow you to roam the Net. One thing is for sure – iTV can't replace your computer, at least not until the services become compatible with broadband. But it will certainly liven up those long ad breaks...

The dating game

Is online dating a sham or a surefire way to find love? We dig deeper with the help of three guinea pigs...

STATISTICS ARE FASCINATING THINGS. TRUE, THEY can be manipulated to tell you almost anything you want to hear, but somewhere in there lies a grain of truth. One of the most recent pieces of number-crunching concerns marriage and reveals, among other things, that half of us now meet our future spouses in the workplace.

This, apparently, is because we no longer have the time to meet people through more traditional methods – mutual friends, pubs and clubs, blind dates – because we're all, er, working too hard. Hence the rise in office romances.

The other interesting, and related, statistic thrown up is that lonely hearts is a burgeoning industry: chat lines, agencies and newspaper ads are all reaping the rewards of an increasingly fragmented society. And you can throw into that mix matchmaking's latest outlet: online dating.

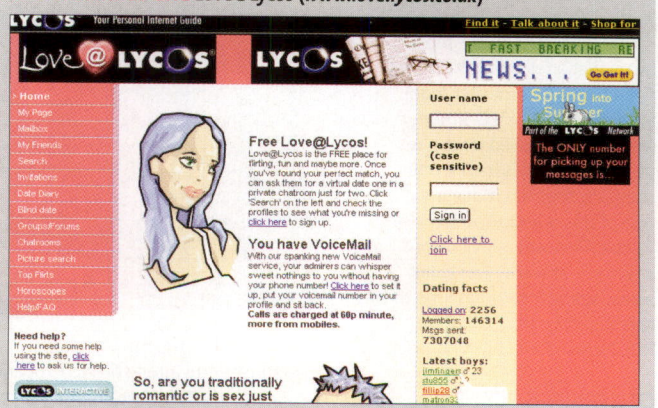
Those two words, when thrown together, carry an almost inevitable stigma. The Web might have thrown off the 'geeks and weirdos' tag as more and more of us have jumped online, but when you mix it with lonely hearts, which has always carried an even heavier weight of social exclusion, you're surely talking true desperation?

In fact, the stats show more of us than ever are prepared to ditch singledom with the Net. And »

Our three willing volunteers (right) were signed up to the dating site we felt best suited their needs, then given two weeks to spend time making contacts and, where possible, setting up real-life dates. Turn over to read how they fared – and whether they'd recommend online dating...

BLIND DATE NUMBER 1 >>

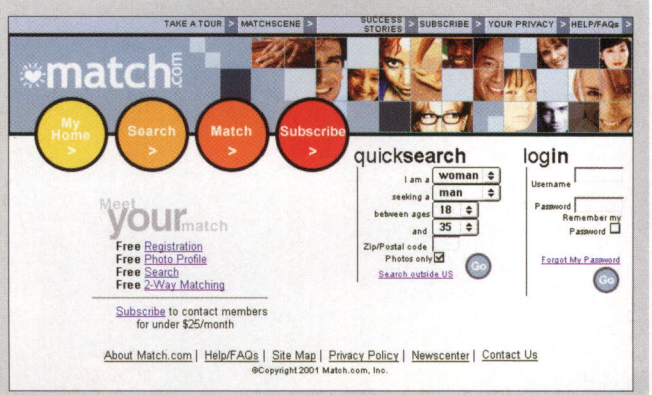
NAME Andy Howes
AGE 27
OCCUPATION Photographer
LOOKING FOR 'Someone to have a laugh with'
RECOMMENDED SITE Love@Lycos (*www.love.lycos.co.uk*)


LYCOS Your Personal Internet Guide
Find it - Talk about it - Shop for
Love@LYCOS
LYCOS
FAST BREAKING NEWS...
Go Get It!
Home
My Page
Mailbox
My Friends
Search
Invitations
Date Diary
Blind date
Groups&Forums
Chatrooms
Picture search
Top Flirts
Horoscopes
Help&FAQ
Free Love@Lycos!
Love@Lycos is the FREE place for flirting, fun and maybe more. Once you've found your perfect match, you can ask them for a virtual date one in a private chatroom just for two. Click 'Search' on the left and check the profiles to see what you're missing or click here to sign up.
You have VoiceMail
With our spanking new VoiceMail service, your admirers can whisper sweet nothings to you without having your phone number! Click here to set it up, put your voicemail number in your profile and sit back.
Calls are charged at 60p minute, more from mobiles.
User name
Password (case sensitive)
Sign in
Click here to join
Dating facts
Logged on: 2256
Members: 146314
Msgs sent: 7307048
Latest boys:
Spring into Summer
Part of the LYCOS Network
The ONLY number for picking up your messages is...
Need help?
If you need some help using the site, click here to ask us for help.
So, are you traditionally romantic or is sex just

WORDS: DAVID SHARP; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO, KOBAL

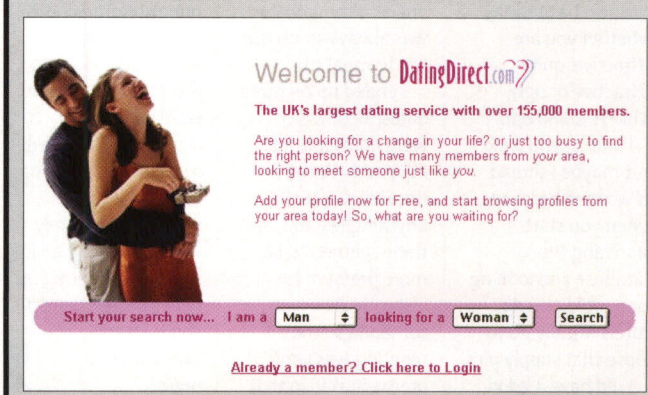
BLIND DATE NUMBER 2 >>

NAME Sue Copeman
AGE 30
OCCUPATION Project manager
LOOKING FOR 'A nice boyfriend'
RECOMMENDED SITE Match.com (*www.match.com*)



BLIND DATE NUMBER 3 >>

NAME Peter Crush
AGE 25
OCCUPATION Advertising executive
LOOKING FOR 'Someone new – it's hard to meet people in London'
RECOMMENDED SITE Dating Direct (*www.datingdirect.com*)


Welcome to DatingDirect.com
The UK's largest dating service with over 155,000 members.
Are you looking for a change in your life? or just too busy to find the right person? We have many members from your area, looking to meet someone just like you.
Add your profile now for Free, and start browsing profiles from your area today! So, what are you waiting for?
Start your search now... I am a Man looking for a Woman Search
Already a member? Click here to Login

Flowers: a time-honoured trick

there are a host of reputable, cutting edge, UK-centric sites only too willing to help which are currently working hard to shake the pre-conceptions many people hold towards the whole principle of online match-making. With the Net, they point out, you get to develop a feel for the person you're going to meet (through email or online chatting) long before you have to take the plunge. You've got an entire database – a global one, if you like, complete with pictures – at your fingertips, fully searchable in an instant. And though anonymity is a double-edge sword in the wired world, it can come in extremely handy when it comes to taking those first tentative steps. In the States, online dating is almost second nature, part of the national fabric. The revolution starts here...

TRISH MCDERMOTT IS ONE OF THE LEADING exponents of online dating currently trying to convert traditionally recalcitrant Brits to its wonder. As the exotically-titled Vice President of Romance at Match.com, she presides over 6 million registered singles worldwide, many of them in the UK. Over 80,000 users sign up every week.

From her plush San Francisco suite, as minions hunch over keyboards fine-tuning the site and launching new initiatives to attract members, McDermott preaches the Match.com gospel (encouragingly, regarding herself as something of an online dating guru, she uses the site herself to look for love, as she's been too busy running it to keep a social life or find romance).

Match.com launched in 1995 in Silicon Valley, one of the first lifestyle dot coms anywhere. By focusing itself on its immediate vicinity, it showed Web high-fliers – venture capitalists, bankers, programmers, moguls – that Net dating could work. The word soon spread.

Partners engage in a virtual 'courtship' involving email or chat

'We tend to marry later in life than we once did, so when we are ready to settle down we may no longer have access to the thriving social community that universities once provided,' says McDermott. 'There was a network of eligible single people on tap there who were the same age, had the same education and shared similar interests to our own.

'Also, some of us move away from home, leaving behind friends and family members who once functioned as informal matchmakers by inviting us to parties and introducing us to other eligible singles.' And that's where dating sites come in.

Most of them work around a fairly standard model: sign up and you're asked for a raft of personal details, including age, occupation, loca-

'MY FRIENDS WERE SOON JEALOUS WHEN I MET PEOPLE'

PETER CRUSH »

'Dating Direct was pretty simple – you ticked a few boxes about what sort of things you did and filled up different fields like whether you smoke, if you're white or black, gay or straight (quite important, that one) and if you're religious. You also have to say whether you are attractive, quite attractive or ugly, which I found odd.

I didn't send a pic, but maybe I should have done because when you start searching the database and looking for people, you do automatically go to those that supply pics.

I did have a good success rate in terms of girls replying back to me saying they would like to meet up – better than I expected, actually, as I thought the people I liked would be flooded with loads of other replies. Some only lasted as email chats and after a bit of online flirting, there was always an excuse not to meet up.

I ended up on three dates, all of which were enjoyable if a little odd. It's the first time I'd ever tried anything like this, and there seemed to be more pressure to instantly click with someone so the meeting was very premeditated in that respect. But on the other hand it cuts away the nonsense as you both know what you're there for and you simply say yes or no to meeting them again. I'll definitely stay friends with one of them, but no more.

There are some oddballs out there, but also some really sincere people who do honestly want to meet people – these were who I was attracted to. I did feel a stigma about doing it, and my friends ribbed me, but they were jealous when I said I was meeting up with another person. You have to swallow your pride.'

tion, hobbies and personal preferences, as well as those of your potential partner. Pay the registration fee – which averages £15 a month – and you'll soon be emailed with potential matches from the site's database (some sites tantalisingly show you the matches before asking for the fee) or have access to browse through it yourself.

Photographs are an important part of this browsing and selecting process. Despite the theory that online dating eliminates the offline snobbery of first impressions – we tend to be attracted initially by physical attributes in the real world – the sites suggest your personal profile is eight times more likely to be read by another user if you've included a snap.

After that, you're on your own. Most partners make first contact by email and, if they like the sound of each other, engage in a virtual 'courtship' through email or Instant Messenger-style chat for anything between a week and a couple of months before finally deciding to meet up offline.

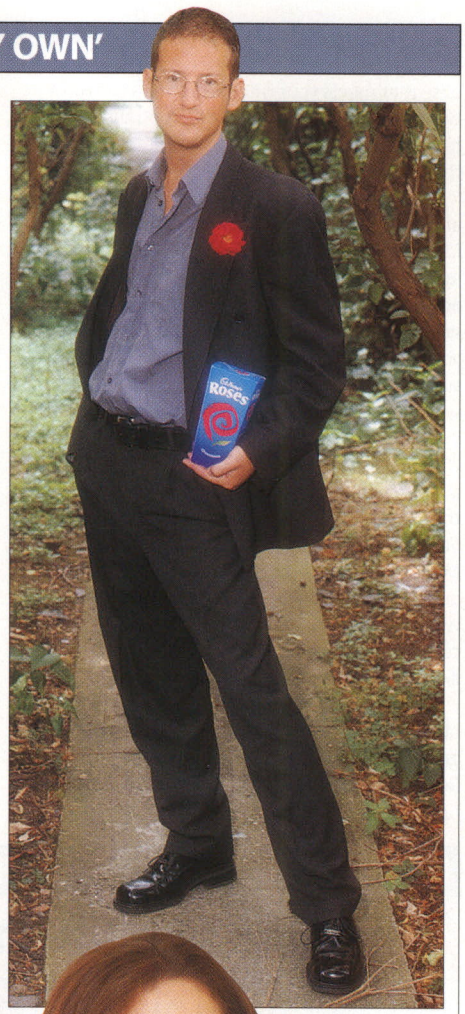
What makes it all so much more efficient and attractive than fusty old dating agencies is the sheer range of people you can meet and the limited effort required on your part.

'You can sit for an hour in the evening, go online and meet twenty different people. To me the Internet is absolutely designed for this type of process,' says Martin Clifford, COO at Derby-based uDate.com, one of the leading UK-run dating sites.

'Enter our database and describe yourself with 100 pieces of demographic information – you check various boxes describing your age, your height, your interests, your personality etc. Then you describe 30 pieces of information about the person that you want to meet.' UDate's queries range from simple questions to teasers like 'Do you enjoy KFC?' or 'Are you a deep person?' »

'I WAS LEFT SITTING ON MY OWN'

ANDY HOWES »



"Love@Lycos is free: you register, give a few personal details on age, area and outlook and then write a profile of yourself to sell yourself to the opposite sex.

You browse profiles of people you might be interested in (I actually set up two profiles, to see which would make the best impression), choosing partners by areas of the country and interests or a picture, if they've posted one, and then you can send the object of your affections a message if they take your fancy.

I got chatting with a lot of girls, a lot of who seemed funny and articulate, mostly students or girls bored at work. The problem is that at the back of your mind there is always the suspicion that they're not who they say they are and you could end up disappointed.

I ended up meeting a couple of the girls I clicked with, but I can't say either date was particularly successful. My most scarring encounter was with Hannah – we went into a bar and I ordered a bottle of wine as she went off to the ladies.

By an amazing twist of fate she had an urgent call from a friend as soon as she got out telling her she must rush to the nearest hospital to see her injured rabbit or some such lame excuse. I was left sitting there on my own with a bottle of wine and two empty glasses..."

'I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MANY EMAILS I'VE HAD'

SUE COPEMAN »

"I have been single for six months. I would say that I am fairly career-orientated and haven't had much time to find love. A year ago I came out of a fairly disastrous relationship and had made sure in my mind that it would be a long time before I would ever take another man seriously.

Writing my Match.com profile was a fairly daunting experience. There were so many questions – a brief summary about me, an expanded summary about me, things that I like, things that I don't like, the type of men I would like to meet. The results were immediate, though – a string of men who matched my preferences all popped up on the screen.

I decided on three of them that I liked and sent them each an email. It was really weird talking to a complete stranger but I had to take a chance. Suddenly the challenge became much, much more appealing.

I was talking to two very good friends of mine recently who had an arranged marriage and showed them the Web site – they said it was very much the same apart from that you do the vetting and not the parents. It's amazing how many people say that they would rather die than register on something like this. However, once I have shown them the site and explained it they have registered too.

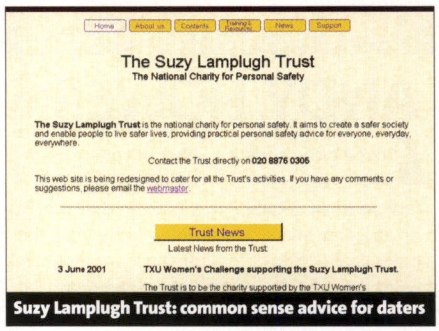
I cannot believe how many emails I have had – I had no idea that there were so many single men out there. I had come to the conclusion that I was the only single person in the world. I think online dating is not only a great way to find a partner but also a great way to make new friends – and I'm hoping to go out on my first date very soon."

'Then you run a match,' says Clifford. 'The first match you can do is to find everybody in the database that meets your criteria. Then you can run a two-way match that not only finds on the database everyone that matches your criteria, but those where you match their criteria too.

'So the analogy is that you walk into a bar late at night and in that bar there are 2 million people. Click your fingers and everyone that's not compatible with you disappears. Then click your fingers again and everyone that you're not compatible with from their perspective also disappears and you're left with people that you might have a successful match with. Now when you're playing with 5 million people that is clever technology.'

OF COURSE, ALL 'BLIND' DATING INVOLVES A RISK, and the potential anonymity of the Web increases this. Email allows us to change our names, hide our locations and remove personal details. Match.com and all the sites we spoke to were quick to point to their strict vetting processes, whereby all users were screened and subject to a code of conduct which would see them removed if others complained about their behaviour.

But if you do make an offline date on the basis of an online relationship, there are common sense guidelines to follow. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust (***www.suzylamplugh.org***) has a number of important tips, including:


Home
About Us
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News
Support
The Suzy Lamplugh Trust
The National Charity for Personal Safety
The Suzy Lamplugh Trust is the national charity for personal safety. It aims to create a safer society and enable people to live safer lives, providing practical personal safety advice for everyone, everyday, everywhere.
Contact the Trust directly on 020 8876 0305
This web site is being redesigned to cater for all the Trust's activities. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email the webmaster.
Trust News
Latest News from the Trust
3 June 2001
TXU Women's Challenge supporting the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.
The Trust is to be the charity supported by the TXU Women's

Suzy Lamplugh Trust: common sense advice for daters

- **Never give out personal details such as phone number, name, address or personal description via email or a chat room**
- **If you make a date, don't give out your address or surname**
- **Always meet in a public place and take a friend along at first, asking them to return at a pre-arranged time. Tell someone where you're going and who with, as well as when you'll be back. If you feel uneasy, don't give out details or arrange a second meeting**

Unsurprisingly, McDermott also advocates that you join a paid service. In her opinion the fact that someone is actually willing to shell out their hard-earned cash qualifies them as being more sincere about the process. In fact, she says, online dating can be safer than other methods: 'All dating requires that you ultimately trust someone at the end. But at least have the opportunity to let your intuition guide you, ask questions, exchange information and do this at a pace that is comfortable for you. Then you are completely secure.

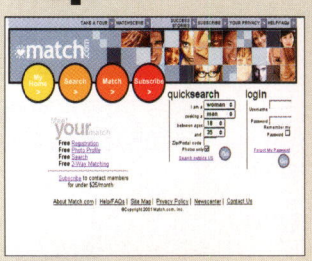
'In offline dates, few of us are able to shine. There are so many issues about rejection: am I good enough and young enough and fit enough? We don't want to say anything too crazy so we shut down. Everything that's really charming about someone is whimsical and vulnerable and first dates tend to be the antithesis of that – we're very controlled and careful and because of that we don't really shine. That's the really lovely thing about online dating: people can shine online. Everybody can put their best foot forward.'

So much so, indeed, that McDermott claims the existence of a phenomenon called 'online chemistry.' True or not, the met-online-and-went-on-to-wed success stories have become so numerous they don't even make the papers anymore following the initial rash of tales a couple of years ago. While we still have an innate curiosity about people who meet online – 'and they'd never even seen each other!' – it is no longer quite such a novelty. Registrars and wedding professionals report an ever-increasing number of Net marriages.

The stigma may still linger, but this is one area of the Web that could change the way we live forever...

DATING DESTINATIONS REVIEWED AND RATED

Top sites for swinging singles »



MATCH

www.match.com ★★★★

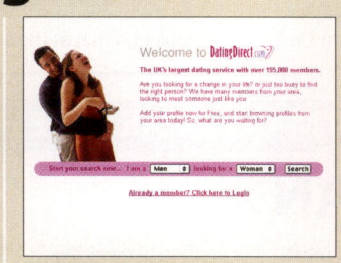
Established in April 1995, the first baby of a Match.com marriage popped out under a year later. Claims to be responsible for another 50 babies and 1200 marriages. Free to register, pay to subscribe.

UDATE/KISS

www.udate.com and www.kiss.com

★★★★★

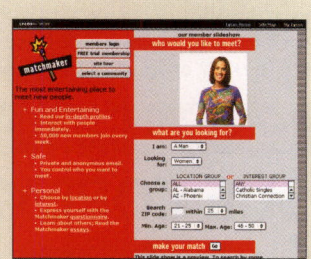
One of the world's largest online dating businesses, which acquired kiss.com in February. The global database means you can choose locations. Free to register, pay to join..


Welcome to DatingDirect.com
The UK's largest dating service with over 155,000 members.
Start your search now... I am a
Man
looking for a
Woman
Search
Already a member? Click here to Login

DATING DIRECT

www.datingdirect.com ★★★

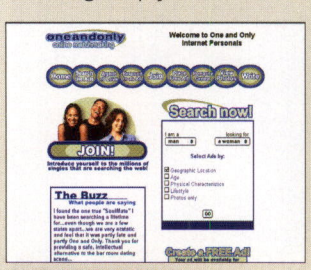
The UK's largest dating service with over 155,000 active members. Claims to do away with gimmicks such as free trials, nicknames and unmoderated chat rooms. Free to register, pay to subscribe.



MATCHMAKER

www.matchmaker.com ★★★★

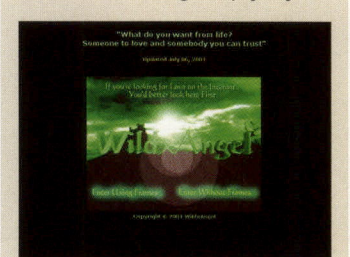
This has a jazzy slide show preview feature that flicks through profiles of potential partners. You can also read bios, view photos, chat and send email. Free trial membership, pay to subscribe.



ONE AND ONLY

www.oneandonly.com ★★★

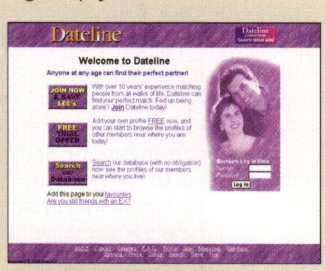
Search through the ads here by geographic location, age, physical characteristics, lifestyle or photos. Supposedly saves you valuable time by highlighting the cream of the crop. Free to register, pay to join.



WILDXANGEL

www.wildxangel.com ★★★★★

A huge archive of top tips and stories alerting would-be Web daters to the dangers of dating online. In a series of essays and confessional tales it helps you to sniff out the scammers from the true romantics.



DATELINE

www.dateline.co.uk ★★★★★

The granddaddy of dating agencies. Registering could be easier, but the database is huge and the service trustworthy. You can search through it free to see if anyone takes your fancy, though signing up costs £100.

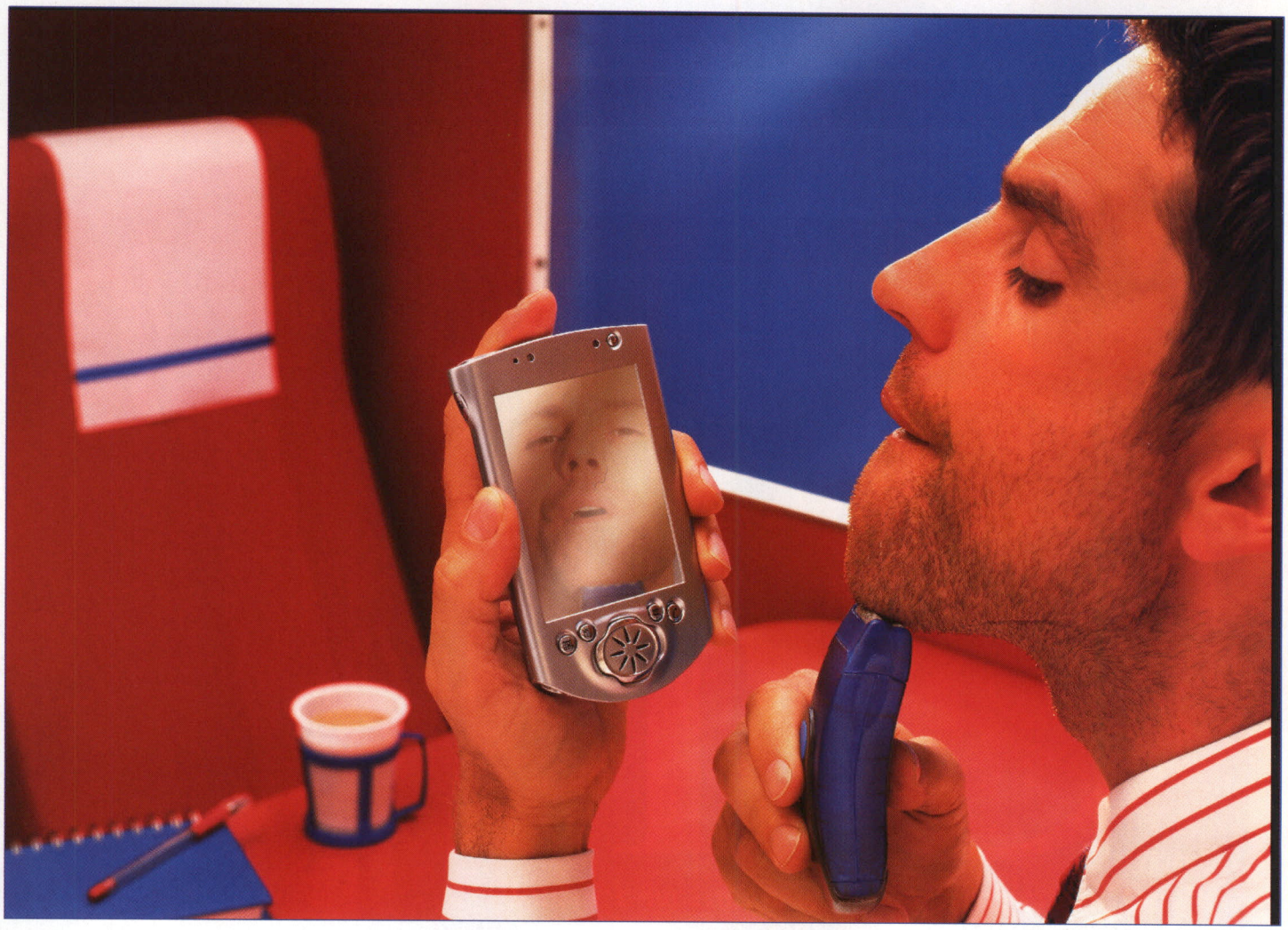
PERSONALS 365

www.personals365.com ★★★

Has nearly 55,000 users and tells you how many people are actively online looking for a chat at any moment. Members can chat on the phone as well as the Web. Free 7-day trial, pay to subscribe.

INTERNET BANKING

Nationwide



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Isn't the latest technology brilliant... if only you knew how much it can do! Well, start banking over the Internet with us and you won't just look the part - you'll be using your Pocket PC in the way it was intended.

After all, our award winning Current Account is the first in the UK to let you manage your money via a Pocket PC. It's quick. It's secure. And it's so easy.

So use your Pocket PC wisely and visit us today.

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Banking | Credit Card | Insurance | Investments | Loans | Mortgages | Pensions | Savings

FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO ENTER THE INTERNET BANKING PRIZE DRAW, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR ASK AT YOUR LOCAL BRANCH. YOU MUST BE 16 OR OVER TO APPLY FOR A FLEXACCOUNT (NATIONWIDE'S CURRENT ACCOUNT). THE PROVISION OF CERTAIN FLEXACCOUNT FACILITIES IS SUBJECT TO STATUS. YOUR PC & POCKET PC (PDA) MUST MEET A MINIMUM SPECIFICATION FOR INTERNET BANKING. CALLS MAY BE RECORDED. INFORMATION CORRECT AS AT 21/06/01.

Game On

It's not just hardcore gamers who can save a fortune online. Whatever your taste, there's a store to suit you

PC CD-ROM, DC, PSX, PS1, PS2, N64, GBA. The video game world is worryingly well-endowed with abbreviations and coded meaning. But whether you own a Personal Computer, Sega Dreamcast, PlayStation, PlayStation 2, Nintendo 64 or the latest handheld GameBoy Advance, you can buy games online. They are usually available at significant savings compared to your local high street supplier – and now and then you might even save cash buying from the site of the store you've just walked out of...

As ever, though, it's a question of knowing where to go to make the savings – so we set out to test the qualities of a wide variety of e-tailers. We picked up software for what at present are the two most popular gaming formats, the PC and the PS1 – the original PlayStation. As the *Space Invaders* generation now approaches its mid-forties, it's getting increasingly likely that gamers will be looking for a games on a couple of different platforms, whether it's the Dreamcast in the lounge, the PC in the office or even the little ones' GameBoy. And of course kids will also be looking out for the latest consoles of their own, especially as prices come down and increasingly younger children can afford them.

The various platforms tend to offer very different gaming experiences, with the type of game it's best to play on each differing dramatically. For the quick-fix football fan we decided to order *International Superstar Soccer Evolution 2* on the PlayStation. In our opinion, this is the best football simulation franchise available on any platform, and certainly better than anything available on the PC, even with its fantastic graphics and extra processing power. However, these qualities come into their own with our second title, *Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis*. This hardcore war simulator is designed to be played on the latest high-spec PCs, with their powerful processors working through vast amounts of info and the help of a 3D graphics card to render wonderfully vivid images.

Just as the various platforms are very different, but have their individual good »

WORDS: SHAUN MARIN; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT

PC CD-ROM
ISS
iss pro evolution
OTBALL GAME EVER MADE"
fficial PlayStation Magazine
ESPN
yStation
OPERATION
FLASHPOINT
COLD WAR CRISIS
90%
PC Zone
GAME OF THE MONTH
PC GAMER
July 2001
Codemasters
GENIUS AT PLAY

points, so too have the Web sites we bought the software from. It's refreshing that it was relatively easy to find 10 UK-based Web sites selling both games under secure conditions and without punitive returns policies.

While this meant we ended up shopping from a very good selection of all-round gamers' shops it also meant we had to exclude a couple of others that didn't sell both platforms. The most notable of these was Play247 (***www.play247.com***), which not only sells a variety of console games and hardware – including very reasonably priced GameBoy Advance units – but also Region 1 DVDs and bargain CDs. Sadly, though, there was no PC software – so no entry to our test.

Across the board, performance was pretty impressive. Prices may have varied dramatically – for example, *Operation Flashpoint* ranged from £24.99 at Gameswire to £32.99 at Gamesstreet – but service was refreshingly good, and delivery dates for each site came in within the specified time: no mean feat.

It's therefore our pleasant task to highlight good points rather than condemn bad performance. And the real highlight of the show was Chipsworld. When we registered online to we were required to fill in a phone number, which was put to excellent use: a representative of Chipsworld called to apologise and say that one if its shops had

Delivery dates all fell within the specified time: no mean feat

sold the last copy of one of our games that morning. We took up Chipsworld's offer of a second-hand copy at £19 which arrived the next day, and was in pretty much the same first-rate condition as all the new copies that arrived. Kudos to Chipsworld.

Other interesting service options included a couple of sites that offered membership schemes, where you pay a small amount upfront, and then get discounted prices on games (Software First) or free posting and package (Special Reserve). These schemes cost £6 and £6.99 to join respectively, which is low enough for most gamers to see savings over the course of a year.

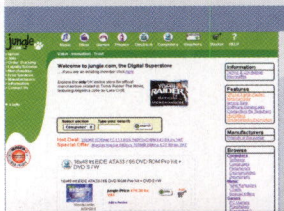
All the sites offered exchanges on faulty goods, which in all honesty should be a given in a market where things very often do go wrong with the products. But interestingly, the majority were also pretty amenable to unwanted games being returned, although these conditions are likely to change, so always check before buying.

Notable stores in this respect include Chipsworld again, which has a seven days no quibble refund policy in place, with postage and full value of the goods refunded as long as the packaging is not damaged in any way. Elsewhere, Game allows you to return faulty or unopened items to your nearest high street branch. More usual is the service from Gamesstreet or Gameswire, where you get the money for the non-faulty game back, but have to pay for the postage.

The prices of the games were all lower than the RRP. And although most high street stores will discount new titles such as *Operation Flashpoint* anyway, a quick nose along London's Oxford Street proved that prices online are still cheaper – the best buys we found can be seen in the table below. And with all but a couple of stores offering free and prompt delivery, we think that's a pretty good reason to buy online.

HOW DO THE GAMES SITES COMPARE?

NAME	FLASHPOINT	ISS PRO	P&P	TOTAL	DELIVERY (p)	DELIVERY (a)
JUNGLE	£26.99	£24.99	£1.78	£53.76	1-4 days	3 days



www.jungle.co.uk **Well-known retailer of games, books and music**
A good site with a very impressive range of hardware and software for sale. The prices are very good, which means that even with the small delivery fee, it's still among the cheapest here. Look out for the regular special offers up on site, which make the prices – already reasonable – even more attractive.

GAME	£29.99	£29.99	Free	£59.98	2 days	2 days

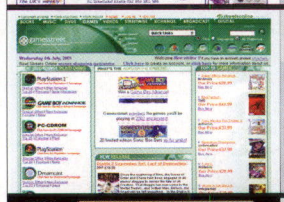
www.game.uk.com **The household name on the high street**
The high street gaming giant has an impressive online presence. It has a very wide range of games, many with reviews and screen shots. It also offers free delivery on UK orders over £10., which is ridiculously easy to spend here. You can also return unwanted games to the actual shops, making sending games back that much easier.

GAMESWIRE	£24.99	£24.49	Free	£49.48	1-5 days	3 days

BEST FOR VALUE

www.gameswire.com **Independent stockist offering value and choice**
A well-designed site that stocks an impressively wide range of games. The search engine is very accurate and brings you up an impressively relevant selection of titles no matter how vague your enquiry. Ordering is a breeze with only a few clicks between selection and payment, which is especially nice as the service was so cheap.

GAMESSTREET	£32.99	£28.99	Free	£61.98	1-3 days	2 days



www.gamesstreet.co.uk **The gaming arm of the Streets Online empire**
Part of the Streets Online network, this site offers a wide selection of titles, all with useful reviews and free postage. The site design fits in with the rest of the chain, and the user reviews often give a better feel for the games than the official blurb which is also on show. However, it was the joint most expensive site.

CHIPSWORLD	£28.99	£29.99	Free	£58.98	2-3 days	2 days

BEST FOR SERVICE

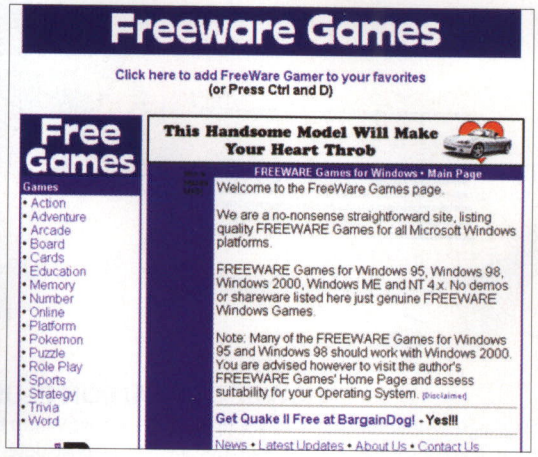
www.chipsworld.co.uk **Impressive newcomer to the Web**
This site endeared itself to us with its excellent customer service. And although the price shown in the table for *ISS* puts it among the most expensive here, the actual price of our second hand copy was £10 cheaper, ranking it as the cheapest. However, site design is basic, and game information assumes a lot of prior knowledge

DELIVERY (p) = promised; **DELIVERY** (a) = actual

GET YOUR GAMES DIRECT

SOFTWARE DOWNLOADS STRAIGHT TO YOUR DESKTOP

freeloader.com
HOME
JOIN LINEONE NOW
and we'll send you a copy of Suzuki Alstare for Free
WELCOME TO FREELOADER.COM
Register to start freeloading
Any questions? Find the answers here.
freeloader.com gives away the world's very best games. Really? Yes, it's true. Games that you would normally buy on CD, or play through your browser, are available here, free.
GAME DEVELOPERS WANTED: Freeloader can help talented individuals or teams earn cash & gain the recognition they deserve. Click here to find out more.
GTA2
NEW EPISODE
Join the GTA2 high score table and see if you can be the best today or of all time.
freeload it
FLOCCER
BROWSER GAME
Top soccer action where you can even pick your own formation. Bags of pace and loads of fun.
freeload it
QUICK NAV
FREE GAMES
LOWDOWN
GAME REVIEWS
FEATURES
JOIN NOW
TO REGISTER with LINEONE
one of the UK's leading USP's
register or login
Magazine
Point Blank 3


Freeware Games
Click here to add FreeWare Gamer to your favorites
(or Press Ctrl and D)
Free Games
Games
• Action
• Adventure
• Arcade
• Board
• Cards
• Education
• Memory
• Number
• Online
• Platform
• Pokemon
• Puzzle
• Role Play
• Sports
• Strategy
• Trivia
• Word
This Handsome Model Will Make Your Heart Throb
FREEWARE Games for Windows • Main Page
Welcome to the FreeWare Games page.
We are a no-nonsense straightforward site, listing quality FREEWARE Games for all Microsoft Windows platforms.
FREEWARE Games for Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 2000, Windows ME and NT 4.x. No demos or shareware listed here just genuine FREEWARE Windows Games.
Note: Many of the FREEWARE Games for Windows 95 and Windows 98 should work with Windows 2000. You are advised however to visit the author's FREEWARE Games' Home Page and assess suitability for your Operating System. [Disclaimer]
Get Quake II Free at BargainDog! - Yes!!!
News • Latest Updates • About Us • Contact Us

What are the two main drawbacks to shopping online as opposed to the high street? Firstly, delivery times – people want their product and they want it NOW. And secondly, postage and packing – often, online savings are significantly eaten into by P&P.

That needn't be a problem, especially now that companies have started to see the benefit in offering full games for download. No packaging, no waiting, no postage fees.

You've been able to download demos of new games from ***www.demo planet.com*** and even full versions of freeware games (***www.freewaregamer.com***) for some time. You can also get whole games for free from Freeloader (***www.free loader.com***) as long as you don't mind filling in a few questionnaires.

But one of the UK's largest online retailers is set to sell complete games for download from its site. Bol.com (***www.bol.com***) sees downloading as the future of games retail: why bother with extra packaging, when it's the code that matters? It's a win/win situation.

The only drawback at the moment is the cost of downloading the games; modern games are large, and connection speeds slow. But the increasing popularity of high speed always-on connections such as ADSL should soon negate this problem. The future is almost here.

	NAME	FLASHPOINT	ISS PRO	P&P	TOTAL	DELIVERY (p)	DELIVERY (a)
	AMAZON	£27.99	£27.99	£2.63	£58.61	1 day	1 day

www.amazon.co.uk **Yes, it sells games too...**
The online megastore keeps on getting bigger, but the service it offers remains equally impressive. It came out at as one of the costliest sites here – with the most expensive delivery fee – but it beat all the other sites by delivering spot-on the next day. So if you're in a rush, think Amazon.

	SOFTWARE FIRST	£25.99	£25.99	Free	£51.98	1-3 days	2 days

www.softwarefirst.co.uk **Long-established software retailer**
A simple but well-designed site for a company that's been going for five years now. It stocks lots of titles at reasonable prices and runs a membership scheme, which will result in further savings for dedicated gamers. You pay a small set fee, and get a small discount off every game you order.

	GAMEPLAY	£26.99	£22.99	Free	£49.98	Not stated	2 days

www.gameplay.co.uk **Britain's best-known gaming site**
Formerly Wireplay, this is the online store of the UK's major online gaming network, and therefore has a certain amount of credibility among gamers. The dark design sometimes makes navigation tricky , but a great range and very good service make it well worth the hassle – as do the low cost games and free delivery within the UK.

	SPECIAL RESERVE	£28.99	£28.99	£2	£59.98	Not stated	2 days

www.reserve.co.uk **Membership-only retail club for keen gamers**
Another club-style site, which costs £6.99 to join if you are in the UK. Although you don't get savings on the product, after paying for membership, you don't incur the £1 delivery fee per item that non-members have to pay. Design is pretty basic verging on poor, but it gets the job done very well nonetheless.

	HMV	£29.99	£29.99	£2	£61.98	Not stated	2 days

www.hmv.co.uk **The record store giant that also sells games**
The high street music giant stocks a wide range of gaming titles online, and the site is one of the best to use, with an impressive search engine that allows you to get what you want without too much messing about . It's one of the most expensive sites here, though, but service is good with a choice of delivery options.

TRAVEL COMPANION PLUS £49.95

This is a great multifunctional travelling gadget – a travel alarm that also incorporates a motion sensor so you know if someone's after your luggage and a smoke detector with a startling 110-decibel alarm. The LCD screen displays the time, calendar and temperature and if you snap the unit in two there's even a torch concealed in the middle. Delivery in 5-10 days from ***www.sharperimagebest.com***.

MADE-TO-ORDER HAMPERS FROM £17

Hampers are usually the sole preserve of Christmas, but not so at ***www.picnichouse.com***. Here you can buy them in any size, at any price, and at any time.

Retailtherapy»

:// Gorgeous gadgets, handy home helpers and indulgent innovations

REEBOK BALENI FOOTBALL BOOTS £80

The new season is here, so it's time to get kitted out in the latest gear. If you like to emulate your heroes you might be interested in Ryan Giggs' choice of boot for this year: the Reebok Balini are beautifully designed, space-age wonders and you can pick them up from Reebok's new store at ***www.reebok.com***.

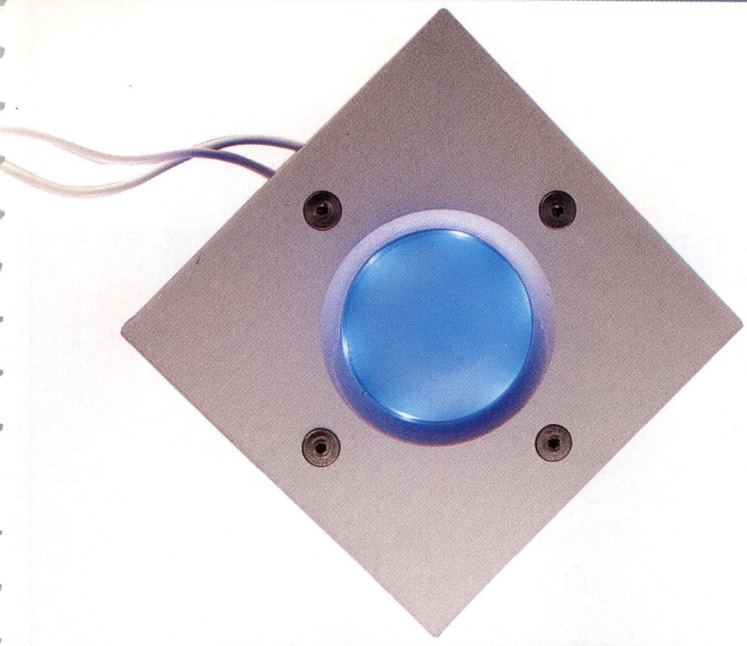
WORLD WATCH £217

Fancy a watch that looks like the earth but doesn't cost it? Head to ***www.thinktheearth.net*** where you'll find the WN-1 World Watch, which tell you the time of anywhere in the Northern Hemisphere and can be reassembled into a desk clock of your own design.

DESK WATER DISPENSER £12.95

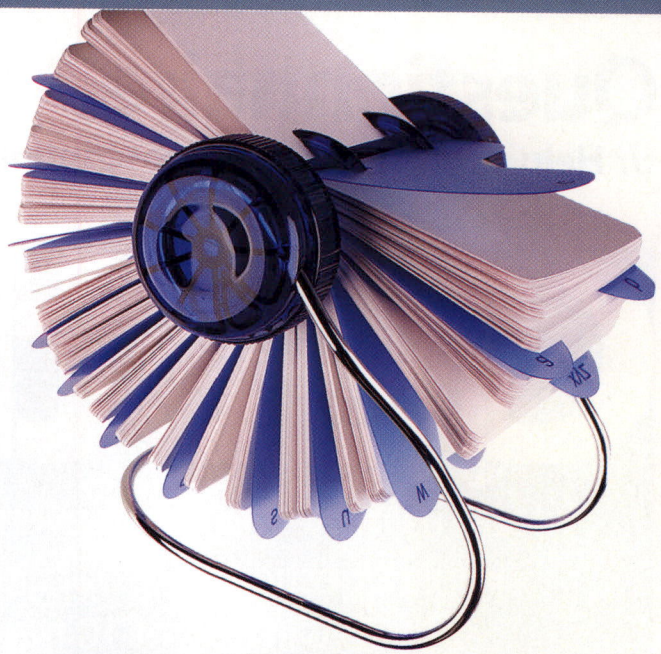
Avoid the office politics and gossips at the water cooler with your own desktop dispenser from ***www.iwantoneofthose.com***. It holds eight glasses and is delivered within two days.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS RENNIE



ILLUMINATED DOORBELLS £39-£69

These ultra-modern doorbells from ***www.oceanuk.com*** are striking in their design. The combination of brushed aluminium and soft glowing illumination brings a touch of chic to an overlooked household necessity.



ROTADEX FLIX £39

The Flix is perfect for storing all your addresses, phone numbers and business contacts. Business cards can also be added by slotting them into the handy plastic sleeves. Buy online at ***www.rotadex.com***.

TOP BUY

MINOLTA VECTIS WEATHERMATIC £240

If you're still waiting to jet off for sunnier climes then you might like to add the Weathermatic to your last-minute shopping list. It takes pictures underwater, is resistant to knocks and is sealed so tightly it stays protected from the sand. Pick one up from ***www.photographdirect.co.uk***.

SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR PAINLESS ONLINE PURCHASING

TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING>>

CHECK THAT THE SITE IS SECURE

A small padlock will appear in the bottom left of your browser to show that you can safely send credit card details through the site. Your Web browser will also tell you whether a site is secure or not when you enter it.

SHOP WITH BRAND-NAME COMPANIES

As with shopping in the real world, you're better off with a company you've actually heard of – and these days, most big name brands own their Web addresses (so you can be sure that ***www.marksandspencer.com*** is, in fact, M&S).

PRINT THE CONTRACT

This is the only permanent record of your purchase, so make sure you keep it, along with your order number, billing address and other details. And here's a fact to put your mind at rest: if it's a UK site, you have the same consumer rights as you do in the high street.

NEVER SEND ANYTHING BY EMAIL

Don't send card details by email – it can be intercepted.

CHECK DELIVERY TIMES AND CHARGES

Companies should tell you the delivery charge, if there is one, on their site. If you're in the Highlands and Islands or Ireland, you may find free delivery doesn't apply.

IF IT GOES WRONG, DON'T WORRY

Contrary to scare stories, online shopping is safer and very often cheaper than traditional methods – and it's in the store's interest to sort out problems quickly.

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Help us make *the net* an even better magazine by filling in the simple questionnaire opposite and we'll enter you in a draw to win one of 10 free subscriptions for a year

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Get the right connection
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XMAS SPECIAL Your £££-saving shopping guide

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ABOUT YOU

Name _____

Age _____ Address _____

_____

_____

Email address _____

Are you Married ❒ Living with partner ❒ Single ❒

Do you have any children? If so, how many? _____

Approximately how much do you earn in a year?

❒ Less than £15,000 ❒ £16-£25,000

❒ £26-£35,000 ❒ £36-£45,000 ❒ £45,000 +

Which of the following do you either currently own or intend to purchase in the next couple of months?

	Own	Intend to buy	Don't intend to buy
PDA	❒	❒	❒
DVD player	❒	❒	❒
GPRS mobile	❒	❒	❒
WAP mobile	❒	❒	❒
MP3 player	❒	❒	❒
Digital camera	❒	❒	❒
Digital camcorder	❒	❒	❒
Games console	❒	❒	❒
PC	❒	❒	❒
Apple Mac	❒	❒	❒
Laptop/Notebook	❒	❒	❒
Peripherals (eg Webcam, speakers)	❒	❒	❒

YOU AND THE MAGAZINE

Are you a subscriber? Yes ❒ No ❒

If you are, how long have you subscribed for? _____

If not, where do you buy the magazine from?

Local newsagent ❒ News chain eg WH Smith ❒ Supermarket ❒

If you're not a subscriber, how often do you buy *the net*?

❒ 1-3 times a year ❒ 4-6 times a year ❒ 7 times or more

THE MAGAZINE

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is great and 5 is poor, please rate the following sections of this month's magazine:

	1	2	3	4	5
thenetnow	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Web Icons	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Dealfinder	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Know Your Rights	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Lab Test	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Retail Therapy	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
What Website	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
Advice Centre	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒

YOU AND THE INTERNET

How often, on average, do you access the Internet?

❒ Once a week ❒ Once a day ❒ More than once a day

From the following list, please select your five favourite kinds of Web site:

Shopping ❒ News ❒ Music ❒

Education ❒ Movies ❒ Travel ❒

Finance ❒ Health ❒ Comedy ❒.

Please your list your five favourite individual Web sites

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Approximately how much do you spend on purchases over the Internet per month?

❒ Nothing ❒ Up to £100 ❒ Up to £250

❒ Up to £500 ❒ Over £500

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME!

Please remove this page (you can photocopy it if you don't want to damage your magazine) and return it to us at:

The net Research, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0JE

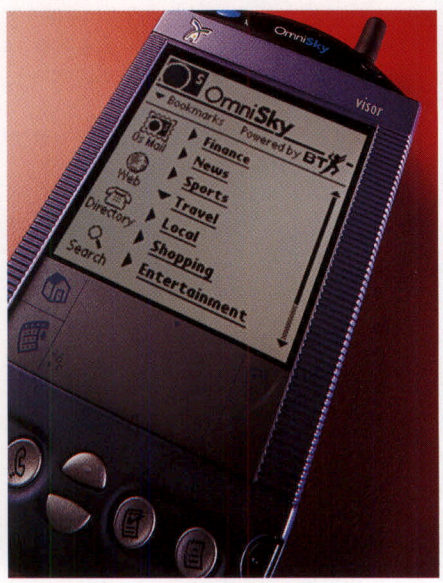
We may pass your details on to companies whose products or services may be of interest to you. If you don't want us to do so, please tick this box ❒ The prize draw is subject to normal Haymarket rules and the editor's decision is final. Winners will be notified in writing on or after September 1 2001. Existing subscribers will have their subscription extended by an additional 12 months should they win.

the net

LIVE 2001 READER OFFER

LIVE
THE HOME ELECTRONICS SHOW
21-23 SEPT 2001, NEC
LOOK · LISTEN · BELIEVE

Get free tickets for your visit to the UK's biggest technology show



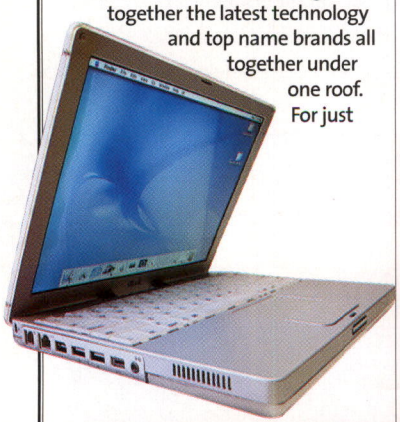
THE NET HAS TEAMED UP WITH LIVE 2001 to offer its readers a fantastic three-for-two ticket deal to the UK's biggest technology and home entertainment show.

LIVE is *THE* event that brings together the latest technology and top name brands all together under one roof. For just three days you'll be able to touch and try the sexiest products and gadgets on the market while soaking up the exciting and vibrant atmosphere that only LIVE can offer. What more could you ask for from a great day out?

LIVE 2001 will take place at the NEC in Birmingham from 21st – 23rd September. Visit the Web site at ***www.liveXpo.co.uk*** to find out more about LIVE, take part in our fantastic competition and make sure you register to get the latest updates on what's hot and what's new at LIVE.

The net, *Stuff* and *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision* magazines are supporting LIVE, so make sure you visit their stands at the show – where they'll be showcasing the latest from the worlds of Web technology, hi-tech gadgetry and great-sounding hi-fi – and get to meet the editors and staff face to face. It's the show no fan of cutting edge technology can afford to miss. **See you in September!**

Offer applies to advance bookings only. Offer can not be used in conjunction with any other ticket offer. Information correct at time of going to press.



Buy 2 tickets to Live 2001 and get a third FREE – that's a saving of £10.50
Simply call the ticket hotline on

0870 9020444

Quote reference MTH

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INTERNET | CONVERGENCE | MULTIMEDIA | WAP | HOME CINEMA | ONLINE GAMING | GPRS

WHAT WEBSITE?

The Best of the Web

@ CHANNELS://

> SPORT 58
Football's back – but where's the best site to follow the latest action?

> MUSIC 62
Forget the queues and the warm beer: get the gig experience on your desktop

> MOVIES 64
Why sci-fi is a serious business online

> TRAVEL 66
Getting from A to B isn't always easy as 1-2-3, but UK travel can be simple online

> LEARNING 68
Play like a pro with the best music sites

> HISTORY 72
Discover family you never knew you had as you explore online genealogy

> MONEY 74
It's never been easier to wager online – but where can you gamble safely?

> SOCIETY 76
Even the royals have sites nowadays. We get down to some regal surfing

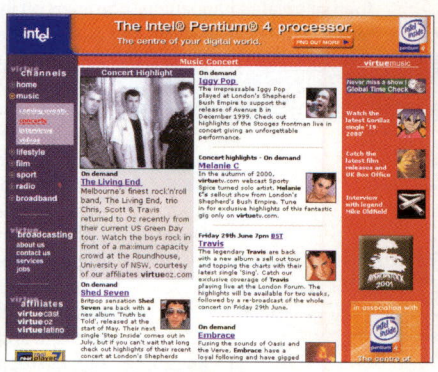
> THE DIRECTORY 84
Hundreds of the best sites on the Web, in a handy A-Z format

thenet GOLD AWARD

The new *net* Gold Award is handed to those five-star sites we recognise as all-time essential URLs

PICTURE: KOBAL

MONEY Earn (or, more likely, lose) money fast with the best gambling sites



MUSIC Big names live on your screen

HISTORY What's in your family closet?

FOCUS:// Football

Football's coming home (page)

Football's back after a brief break – and the biggest sites are better than ever

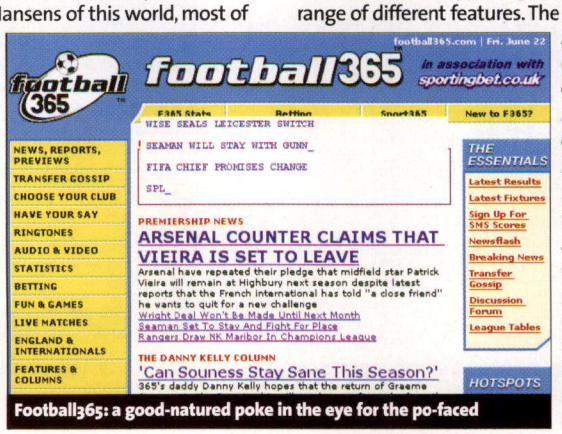
Will Fergie's troops triumph yet again?

@ If you have to bookmark one... thenet GOLD AWARD

FOOTBALL365

www.football365.com ★★★★★

Football should be fun – after all, for all the pained pontification of the Alan Hansens of this world, most of us enjoy the beautiful game for its moments of grace and humour rather than in-depth tactical analysis and heartfelt pathos. Football365, the best of the vast 365 Corporation stable of entertainment sites, is just about the only major online football player around to bear this in mind, and it's brevity and good-natured fun-poking that make it the cream of the crop.


football365.com | Fri. June 22
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WISE SEALS LEICESTER SWITCH
SEAMAN WILL STAY WITH GUNN_
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FUN & GAMES
LIVE MATCHES
ENGLAND & INTERNATIONALS
FEATURES & COLUMNS
PREMIERSHIP NEWS
ARSENAL COUNTER CLAIMS THAT VIEIRA IS SET TO LEAVE
Arsenal have repeated their pledge that midfield star Patrick Vieira will remain at Highbury next season despite latest reports that the French international has told "a close friend" he wants to quit for a new challenge
Wright Deal Won't Be Made Until Next Month
Seaman Set To Stay And Fight For Place
Rangers Draw NK Maribor In Champions League
THE DANNY KELLY COLUMN
'Can Souness Stay Sane This Season?'
365's daddy Danny Kelly hopes that the return of Graeme
THE ESSENTIALS
Latest Results
Latest Fixtures
Sign Up For SMS Scores
Newsflash
Breaking News
Transfer Gossip
Discussion Forum
League Tables
HOTSPOTS

Football365: a good-natured poke in the eye for the po-faced

Not that 365 is ever anything other than on-the-ball when it comes to news: every major British story is quickly covered by its informed team. And it doesn't stop there – with message boards, competitions, polls and genuinely amusing funnies like lists and Lookalikes, one football-related happening soon spins off into a whole range of different features. The quality of the writing and general insight (columnist David 'Son Of God' Icke aside) gives this a for-the-fans feel, while cult favourites like Mediawatch (which lampoons football coverage) satisfy the media-savvy. As other sporting dot coms waver, Football365 goes from strength to strength and shows no sign of stopping through being a consistently entertaining and reliable destination for all fans.

FOOTBALL UNLIMITED

football.guardian.co.uk ★★★★

Way back when football Web sites were but a glint in the dot com eye, Football Unlimited was already firmly establishing itself. The first and best of *The Guardian*'s excellent stable of online homes, FU quickly set the standard which all others followed: well-written (it uses the main paper's considerable editorial resources), colourful, accurate and fast, this is a serious player, offering all the latest news, a smattering of handy stats for the big clubs, columnists and fixtures. While every fan will find something of interest here, there's no doubt that Unlimited could now do with a bit of an overhaul, not to mention some new features: the Clubs section is a mere list of match reports, for instance. Still essential, though – if only for the daily humour and gossip email, The Fiver.

RIVALS.NET

football.rivals.net ★★★★★

Rivals launched last summer promising an entirely different take on sport (in particular, football) on the Web. Instead of letting journalists rewrite newswire stories or package increasingly unlikely transfer speculation as 'news', the idea was to build a network of fan-run sites which reflected the supporters' passion for their team. A year on and it's clear the Rivals plan has worked – the network is a busy and enjoyable grouping of fan sites on every English and Scottish professional club, each offering news, features and facts from the man-on-the-terrace perspective. You'll need to be allied to a particular team to get the best from the service, but it's an engaging, and often superior, alternative to bigger football sites.

MEGASOCCER.COM

www.megasoccer.com ★★★

Just about the only major new football site to launch for the new season, Megasoccer is unlikely to trouble the likes of Football365, but it's still worth keeping an eye on. Navigation isn't the site's forte – if you're interested in Premiership, rather than Estonian, news you have to scroll through three different menus to find out the latest – but there are a number of innovative features here, namely a kids' section, shop, forums and a daily video round-up of results and developments. It's backed by the superb FAST search engine, which gives good results on football-related requests, and another bonus is a link to Icons (***www.icons.com***), which carries weekly columns from some of the biggest names in the British game. Worth a look.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: PA

TEAMTALK

www.teamtalk.com/football

★★★★★

Back in football's dark ages, certain companies hit on a novel way of making fans pay through the nose by offering daily round-ups of news on their clubs on an extortionately-priced premium rate phone line. Three cheers, then, for the advent of the Internet, which has seen such services replaced by free-for-all sites doing much the same thing. Teamtalk is by far the best

Teamtalk: stop calling 0898 numbers

such site: simply choose your team (the majority of Premiership and Nationwide sides are covered) and delight in regular news stories, stats and player profiles. OK, so some of the gossip-mongering transfer talk might make the red-top tabloids look positively factual, but since when has the average fan wanted the truth alone?

SOCCERNET

www.soccernet.com ★★★

Soccernet was the first massive football site around – indeed, it proved the sport could be covered effectively online – but the former champions are now little more than mid-table play-off contenders. Integration with the huge (not to mention American) ESPN empire has seen a move away from Brit-specific content and the interactive games and stats that once made this site so addictive. Instead, global news is the name of the game: if you want general Premiership happenings, go somewhere else, but for World Cup qualifiers or worldwide transfers and results, Soccernet remains essential.

ONEFOOTBALL

www.onefootball.com ★★★★

We're all Europeans now – and if your interest in our Continental chums extends to their strange footballing ways, OneFootball should be your site of choice. You certainly couldn't accuse the good folk here of being half-hearted, with coverage of every league from Italy and England to Latvia and Macedonia including results, news and stats. When we visited they'd just posted a match report of FK Ekranas Panevezys versus Artmedia Petrzalka in the InterToto Cup »

LINKS ;-) TOP TEAMS' TOP SITES

ARSENAL
Official site ***www.arsenal.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.arsenal-world.net***
Plenty of news and an archive stretching back five years

ASTON VILLA
Official site ***www.astonvilla-fc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.heroesandvillains.net***
Fanzine-run site with plenty of laughs and opinions

BLACKBURN ROVERS
Official site ***www.rovers.co.uk***
Top fan site ***4oooholes.way.to***
Interactive, fun and always up-to-date – another excellent fanzine spin-off

BOLTON WANDERERS
Official site ***www.bwfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.boltonwfc.com***
Full club history and videos of classic goals and moments

CHARLTON ATHLETIC
Official site ***www.cafc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.netaddicks.com***
Full results, statistics and news service from The Valley

CHELSEA
Official site ***www.chelseafc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.geocities.com/Colosseum/2336***
Enthusiastic and never dull

DERBY COUNTY
Official site ***www.dcfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.therams.co.uk***
Uncomplicated reports and statistics in a fetching black

EVERTON
Official site ***www.evertonfc.com***
Top fan site ***www.toffeeweb.org***
Promises to be the ultimate Evertonian home page

FULHAM
Official site ***www.fulhamfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.toofif.com***
Regularly updated news from the Premiership new boys

IPSWICH TOWN
Official site ***www.itfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.twtd.co.uk***
Yet another excellent fanzine-based, Rivals-run, fully interactive effort

LEEDS UNITED
Official site ***www.lufc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***leedsunitedworld.co.uk***
Strange layout, but always updated with fresh articles and player profiles

LEICESTER CITY
Official site ***www.lcfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.forfoxsake.com***
Efficient fan-run site that's as edgy as its Web address might suggest

LIVERPOOL
Official site ***www.liverpoolfc.tv***
Top fan site ***www.shanklygates.co.uk***
Includes columns from Liverpool greats of the past

MANCHESTER UNITED
Official site ***www.manutd.com***
Top fan site ***www.rednews.co.uk***
Reliable independent news and views for United fans

MIDDLESBROUGH
Official site ***www.mfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.boro.co.uk***
Covers all levels of the club in exhaustive detail

NEWCASTLE UNITED
Official site ***www.nufc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.nufc.com***
Updated daily with news and a well-stocked alternative club shop

SOUTHAMPTON
Official site ***www.saintsfc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.saintsforever.com***
Full of interviews, lists and fan-devised humour

SUNDERLAND
Official site ***www.safc.com***
Top fan site ***www.readytogo.net***
Offers merchandise, competitions, freebies and even insider info

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
Official site ***www.spurs.co.uk***
Top fan site ***members.nbci.com/spursextra***
A huge repository of links and info

WEST HAM UNITED
Official site ***www.whufc.co.uk***
Top fan site ***www.westhamonline.com***
Insightful, bang up to date (often breaking exclusives) and witty

FOCUS:// Football <cont>

(attendance: one man and his disinterested dog), and it doesn't get much more marginal than that. And if you're planning a sporting trip across the Channel, check out the travel guides which give directions and tips for every major European team.

It's the pot that's got the lot

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

www.scottishfootball.com ★★★

Yes, we've heard all the jokes. And, yes, we know Scottish football holds very little interest to anyone south of the border, especially in an era which has seen a continual stranglehold on the title by one or other of the Old Firm teams. But Scottish Football does a good job of holding interest in SPL events, as well as providing home pages and rudimentary player profiles for every side down to Division Three. With match reports and full fixtures for every side, and even the odd bit of humour, this is as comprehensive a guide to events up north as you're likely to find on the Internet.

EPLSOCCER

www.eplsoccer.com ★★★★

If your footballing interest extends no further than the Premiership (or you're a Manchester United supporter, in other words) then this is the site for you. EPL, formerly known as FA-Premier, is the most-visited general football site in Britain according to the figures, and won't leave you disappointed if you're after news, facts or figures about your favourite top-flight club – each side has a separate section with a full rundown of last season and the essential profiles and fixtures for this season. If that's all a bit too highbrow, the renamed official Premiership site at ***www.magicsponge.com*** should deliver a little light relief...

Look up the details of every player in Britain

FOOTBALL NEWS

www.footballnews.co.uk ★★★★

Like Soccernet, FootballNews has failed to deliver on its initial promise to become the ultimate destination for, er, football news. There aren't enough stories, and the navigation can be near impossible at times, but you have to admire the site's ambitions. There are personal and transfer details for every professional footballer in Britain, and the coverage of local leagues beats anything else on the Web – if you've ever wondered who's leading the running in the Kettering Weetabix League, your prayers truly have been answered. With sections for the women's game, gambling tips and live score updates, this is an impressive undertaking which deserves support.

The original and biggest Premiership site. Est. 1995
EPLSOCCER.COM
A.K.A. FA-PREMIER.COM
Is Your Ad-Serving Technology...
TEAMS
WIN A TRIP TO JAPAN
Join the new EPL Club for your chance to win a trip to the World Cup Finals... more
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TEAMS
RESULTS
PREVIEWS
STATISTICS
FANS FORUM
FEATURES
NEWS
ARCHIVE
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TOP STORY
VIEIRA BOMBSHELL
Patrick Vieira has reportedly stunned Arsenal by handing in a transfer request ... more
BREAKING NEWS
SEAMAN WILL STAY WITH GUNNERS
UNITED TO RESCHEDULE DERBY CLASH
WISE SEALS LEICESTER SWITCH
WRIGHT IN AS GUNNERS SPLASH £20M
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... more
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NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?
FEATURES
FREE
WHAT THE PAPERS SAY
Seaman and Vieria leaving, the FA break their word and Fulham start the hard way...check out the UK press ... more
TRANSFER NEWS AND VIEWS
WTPS: MR WRIGHT 2
McCLAIR ON SOL'S CHOICES
WTPS: KACH SNUB
EXCLUSIVE MANAGERS CONTENT
REDKNAPP UNVEILED AS POMPEY CHIEF
Portsmouth have appointed former Hammers boss Harry Redknapp as their Director of Football at Fratton Park ... more
VIDEO: GEORGE GRAHAM ON SOL
VIDEO: O'LEARY ON BOWYER AND RIO
VIDEO: BURLEY ON IPSWICH
fast
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THE BEAUTIFUL GAME
MEGASOCCER.COM
Are you America's biggest soccer fan?
BOOKMARK
Add EPLsoccer to your favourites!
EPLSoccer.com: the most-visited general football site in the country

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

Sporting Life: all the sporting information the Press Association can garner

LATEST NEWS AND SCORES

ESPN.com
espn.go.com
Scores for all sports, with a distinctly American bias.

Sky Sports
www.skysports.com
Forget begrudging the TV subscription fee – this is hot sports news from Sky that comes free of charge.

Soccernet
www.soccernet.com
Score flashes from all UK games (part of the ESPN network).

Sporting Life
www.sporting-life.com
News, scores and betting advice from the Press Association on everything from football to NFL.

TOP CRICKET SITES

Cricinfo
www-uk.cricket.org
The essential cricket site, including ball-by-ball text reports .

Cricketnext.com
www.cricketnext.com
Strong opinions and intelligent comment on all the major tours.

The Pavilion
www.thepavilion.com
Up-to-date news, with the latest reports sent to your inbox.

TOP GOLF SITES

Golf Online
www.golfonline.com
A top-notch site with appeal for armchair and active golfers alike.

Open Golf
www.opengolf.com
The official site of The Open, with 360-degree course guides.

PGATour.com
www.pgatour.com
A huge site, as strong on video and audio as it on wordage.

Sport On Air: sporting streamings

ONLINE BETTING SITES

Blue Square
www.bluesq.com
The best-known online bookie.

Sporting Index
www.sportingindex.com
The biggest spread-betting site.

Victor Chandler
www.victorchandler.com
User-friendly Web site from the High Street bookie.

FOLLOW EVENTS LIVE

PlanetFootball.com
www.planetfootball.com
A hub site for English football club's audio broadcasts.

Sport On Air
www.sportonair.com
Up-to-date streamed broadcasts, covering the full gamut of sports, from football to cricket.

talkSPORT
www.talksport.net
Listen to the radio station's sports coverage as it happens.

NEWSGROUP

uk.sport.football
Share your passion or vent your spleen with other fans of British football.

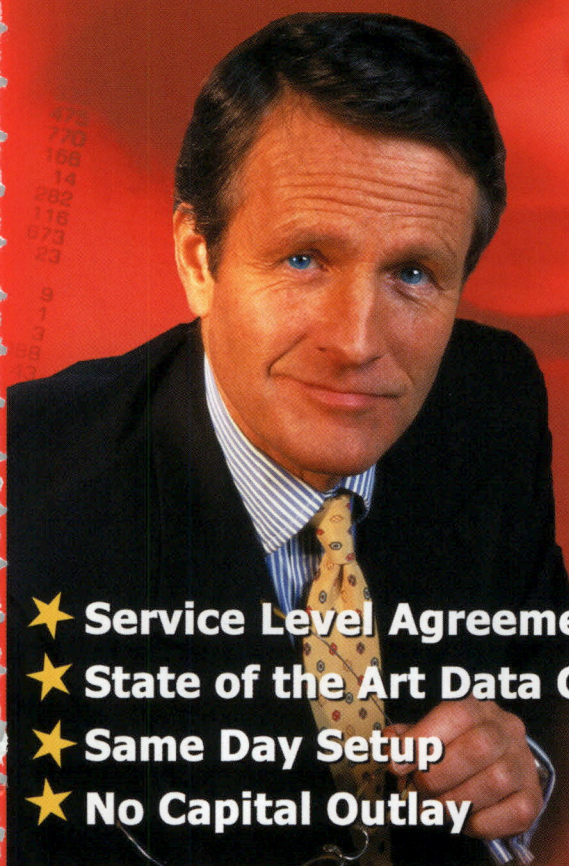
CHAT

www.24hoursoccer.com
Chat about all aspects of world football and get live match commentary and celebrity interviews.

NEED MORE? Useful sports addresses The Directory p84

dedicated servers

A Commitment to Success



- Service Level Agreement
- State of the Art Data Centre
- Same Day Setup
- No Capital Outlay

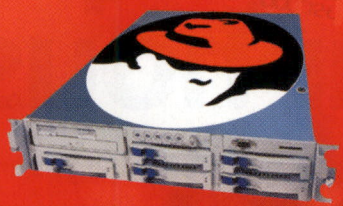
Are you outgrowing virtual hosting? Running into extra costs for high bandwidth use, more domains and email? Does the server itself seem slow and inflexible? Does your web designer keep saying there are so many things you could be doing if only you had more speed and space, and access to the 'workings' of the server? Your accountant won't let you spend a fortune on leased lines and computers. Maybe you don't have the technical staff to run your own network anyway. Well, you have no choice but to put up with virtual hosting, right?

Wrong. The serious solution to web hosting is a dedicated server, and it's within your reach now. You can benefit from high value Service Level Agreements just like the biggest players in your industry. You can enjoy the speed and flexibility of your own server in one of the country's leading Data Centres. You can even choose a server that's as technically simple to operate as virtual hosting, but without the restrictions. Your web designer will be happy.

So will your accountant, because dedicated servers cost less than you think. In fact, they can even work out cheaper than your existing virtual hosting arrangements. You get all the flexibility, all the control, all the speed and room for growth, and all at NO CAPITAL COST. Interested? Call us now.

Additional services such as co-location, system monitoring, firewalls, security services, system backups, managed system administration also available, contact us for details.

LINUX SERVERS



The industry standard operating system for web hosting and Internet services. RedHat Linux configured and running on one of our high speed servers. Apache, Sendmail, Perl, CGI and FTP configured and running as standard.

from £99.99 to £449.99 per month

WINDOWS SERVERS

Ideal for MSCP's, MCSE's, Visual Basic programmers, projects that require Active Server Pages, SQL or office components. Windows 2000 or NT installed & configured. DNS, IIS and MS Frontpage Server Extensions included as standard.

from £199.99 to £549.99 per month

SINGLE SITE SERVERS

A unique product that's as easy to use as a virtual server, but on a standalone dedicated web server. Includes the easy to use Virtual Control Panel 2001, 24 hour technical support by e-mail and phone - all hosted in our state of the art data centre facility.

£99.99 per month FREE SETUP

COBALT RAQ SERVERS

The high end "web-in-a-box" solution. Easy to use, no jargon or systems know-how required. Ideal for web designers, resellers, entrepreneurs etc. Add virtual servers, configure e-mail addresses, activate autoresponders over the Internet all in real time.

from £99.99 to £199.99 per month

part of the Host Europe group of companies

0870 012 6600

www.dedicated-servers.co.uk

PRICES EXCLUDE VAT AND SETUP. ALL TRADEMARKS ARE THE REGISTERED PROPERTY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

FOCUS:// Online concerts

Get the top gigs in your house

Stream gigs to your desktop to avoid dodgy burgers and tatty 'merchandise'

Kraftwerk: no strangers to computer jiggery-pokery

WEMBLEY TV

www.wembleytv.com ★★★★

One of the newest kids on the Webcasting block, WembleyTV was established in October 2000 by, among others, music promoters SJM and Metropolis. The site is unusual in that it is one of the only Webcasters to have already started exploring the new Webcast possibilities with pay-per-view broadband technology. The site has already shown offerings from David Gray, Toploader, Feeder, Duran Duran and Shed Seven among others. The site is unique in that it is also affiliated to several venues, including the Shepherd's Bush Empire, Wembley Arena and Birmingham Academy. It uses these relationships, plus those of its partners, to good effect – it manages to stage Webcasts that would not otherwise be seen.

LIVECONCERTS

www.liveconcerts.com ★★★

As with many of the sites covered here, this one is American in just about every way. The site posts major forthcoming events and current Webcasts on its front page but it's also partnered with Santa Monica radio station KCRW and boasts some fantastic artists – more than 300 have performed live on its show 'Morning Becomes Eclectic'. Recent bands to have appeared include Coldplay and America's latest love, Radiohead. LiveConcerts.com has featured a wide variety of artists and in the past also Webcast the famous Tibetan Freedom Concerts (see ***www.milarepa.org***).

WARNER BROS LIVE CONCERT SERIES

www.warnerbros.com ★★★★

Once you've located the Live Concert Series on the front page of the huge and rather bewildering Warner Bros site (it's in the Music menu), you'll come across some superb Webcasts. It's convenient that Warners is one of the world's biggest labels, as this means that they often have access to some of the world's biggest artists including Eric Clapton, The Corrs and Linkin Park. All are playable through either RealPlayer or the Windows Media Player so all you'll have to do is sit back, enjoy... and dodge the annoying AOL and Netscape adverts.

YAHOO! EVENTS

events.yahoo.com/entertainment

★★★★

The once great Broadcast.com has now been completely amalgamated into the sprawling Yahoo! portal. You'll have to wade past a fair bit of non-music related material (mostly Net chats) but it's an excellent site to visit as, in true Yahoo! fashion, it's a huge directory of most of the concert Webcasts currently going on. The pages also highlight places where related content is available elsewhere on the Yahoo! network; you can add forthcoming Webcasts to your Yahoo! calendar and, this being Yahoo!, you can search for events by name. An essential resource for Webcast junkies.

SFX

www.sfx.com ★★★★

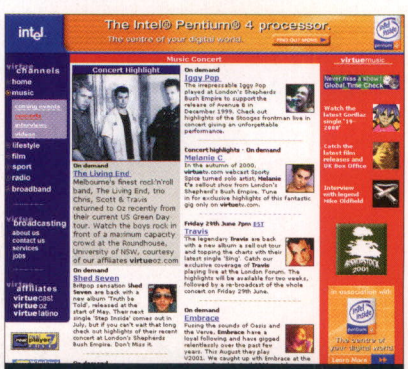
SFX is the promoter behind many of the world's biggest gigs. This summer, for example, it's dealing with U2's *Elevation* tour at the same time as looking after Madonna's hugely successful *Drowned World* tour. Although embarrassingly large, the site is very easy to get around – there are plenty of other sections on concert venues and information about the bands on tour, and while it's clear that these sections of the

@ If you have to bookmark one...

VIRTUETV

www.virtuetv.com/music/concerts ★★★★★

The music section of VirtueTV features interviews and videos to watch as well as one of the best online concerts sections we've seen. Features when we visited included live concerts and highlights from Travis, Melanie C, Iggy Pop and Embrace among others. Some of the Video Webcasts are 'showcases', displaying a variety of videos from throughout a band or artist's career. The site requires you to have either Windows Media or RealPlayer – available free from ***www.windowsmedia.com*** and ***www.real.com*** respectively.



VirtueTV: all the Mel C you could want, and more

VirtueTV's parent company Virtue Broadcasting is a specialist in planning and delivering Webcasts for a huge variety of purposes and is one of the biggest Webcasters around. The site has a large amount of other content, too, ranging from sport, film and lifestyle to a network of online radio stations. Each section has 'on demand' features, which could be anything from an interview to a documentary or video. There's also a whole section catering for broadband – meaning you can stream some of VirtueTV's content at speeds of up to 300Kb per second.

As for ease of use, the site is a doddle to get around, meaning you get your hit in seconds. Although it doesn't have a massively high profile, it excels in not just online music concerts, but almost every area it covers.

WORDS: DAN GRABHAM; PICTURES: ANGELA LUBRANO/LIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

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SCHEDULE
BANDS
CLUBS
CONTESTS
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DCN is the world's largest webcaster of live music, with 100 shows streamed live weekly from 50 venues worldwide and 4000 full concert archives...from all the artists that matter.
LIVE TONIGHT
ONLY 20, WITH AN UNDENIABLE KNACK FOR MELODY
BEN KWELLER
TOP FIVE WEBCAST ARCHIVES
MOST POPULAR
DCN RECOMMENDS
FEATURED CONTEST
LIL JON & THE EASTSIDE BOYZ
UPCOMING WEBCASTS
GET 12 CDs FREE!
4 DVDs for 49¢ each
Digital Club Network: you'll never be short of music with over 4000 shows here

site are designed to sell tickets for forthcoming gigs, it's even more annoying that you can only buy tickets for US gigs. But the Webcast section is worth the visit and it's a good idea to keep checking back for new events that have been added to the Webcast diary. An excellent site, but the British will long for a UK-specific version to go with it.

HOB.COM

www.hob.com/onlinemusic/webcasts

★★★★★

Hob is an acronym for 'House of Blues', but fear not: this site features information, Webcasts, features on various artists plus concert archives and downloads across various genres. The download archive is especially worth a visit, with many of the tracks having been taken from live Webcasts – many of which are produced in conjunction with VH1 and MTV. Every month Hob.com also features artists of the month with related interviews and Webcasts; recently featured artists include Oasis and The Cult. Many of the Webcasts are broadcast live or are only available for a limited period – for example, the Oasis Webcast was only available for 24 hours. If dance music is your forte, there are also Webcasts available on Hob's sister site ***www.hobpm.com***.

You'll always find something that suits your taste

MTV

www.mtv.co.uk ★★★

The world's biggest music channel has this UK effort and a worldwide version (***www.mtv.com***) but, while both sites feature Webcasts, they don't really take full advantage of the medium. It's a pity, as the sites – well organised in every other aspect – could probably use Webcasts as a major draw. This is especially true of MTV.com, which simply uses Hob.com to present a token few Webcasts. The UK site is more impressive – when we visited, it had highlights from recent Travis and Destiny's Child gigs available for view, although 'The Live Room' is a bit hidden away in the features section. There were some good highlights on offer from the likes of the Manic Street Preachers, Teenage Fanclub, 911, Jennifer Lopez, Louise and of course the ubiquitous Madonna. But MTV could do better, and the inclusion of a couple of full sets would not go amiss.

DIGITAL CLUB NETWORK

www.dcn.com

★★★★

The DCN brands itself as 'the live music source' and it's not a claim made lightly, as the site streams 100 shows per week from 50 venues all over the world. The 4000-show archive is worth a visit, too. On the day we visited, unlikely bedfellows Jesus Jones, Guided by Voices and Everlast were the three most poular Webcasts. Besides any amazement that Jesus Jones could ever attain a number one spot, the site is about as comprehensive as it could be. The sheer number of bands available means that you'll always manage to find something that suits your taste or mood. There is also a huge listing of bands, as well as forthcoming events plus profiles on the clubs and venues involved.

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

BAND SITES

UBL.com
ubl.artistdirect.com
Should be your first port of call to use the huge search engine.

Bigmouth
www.bigmouth.co.uk
UK-specific site with many a link.

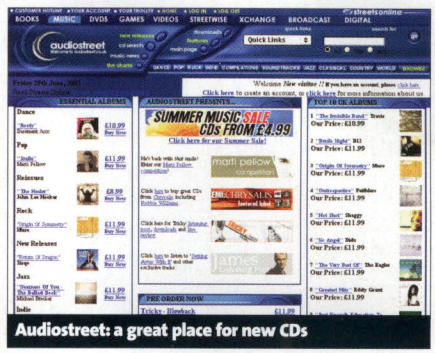
Wall of Sound
wallofsound.go.com
Links and features from the US.

NEWS AND REVIEWS

NME.com
www.nme.com
NME's online version, with a reputation for breaking news.

Rolling Stone
www.rollingstone.com
The US magazine has pulled out all the stops online.

MTV
www.mtv.com
Exclusive news plus free downloads.



Audiostreet: a great place for new CDs

DOWNLOADS

Emusic.com
www.emusic.com
'The premier source for legitimate MP3s'.

MP3.com
www.mp3.com
The site which started it all, still thriving on unsigned bands.

Garageband
www.garageband.com
Top-quality artists screened by discerning judges.

GIGS AND TOURS

Aloud.com
www.aloud.com
Top search engine for every kind of UK gig, from classical to rock.

firstcalltickets.com
www.firstcalltickets.com
Tickets for just about everything from gigs to flower shows.

SceneOne
www.sceneone.co.uk
Easy-to-use guide.

Ticketmaster
www.ticketmaster.co.uk
The best ticket service around.

Way Ahead
www.wayahead.com
Well-priced tickets for top events.

BUYING CDS

Secondsounds
secondsounds.com
Cheap second-hand CDs.

Audiostreet
www.audiostreet.co.uk
Cheap prices and free postage.

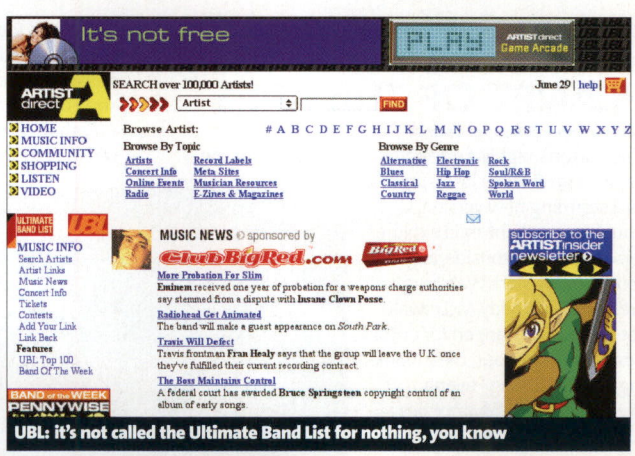
Play247
www.play247.com
Reliable service and a wide range.

MAILING LIST

Discuss technical aspects of MP3s and get tip-offs on free downloads by sending an email to ***mp3-subscribe@topica.com***.

CHAT ROOM

Find a room for your favourite pop genre at ***imusic2.artistdirect.com***.



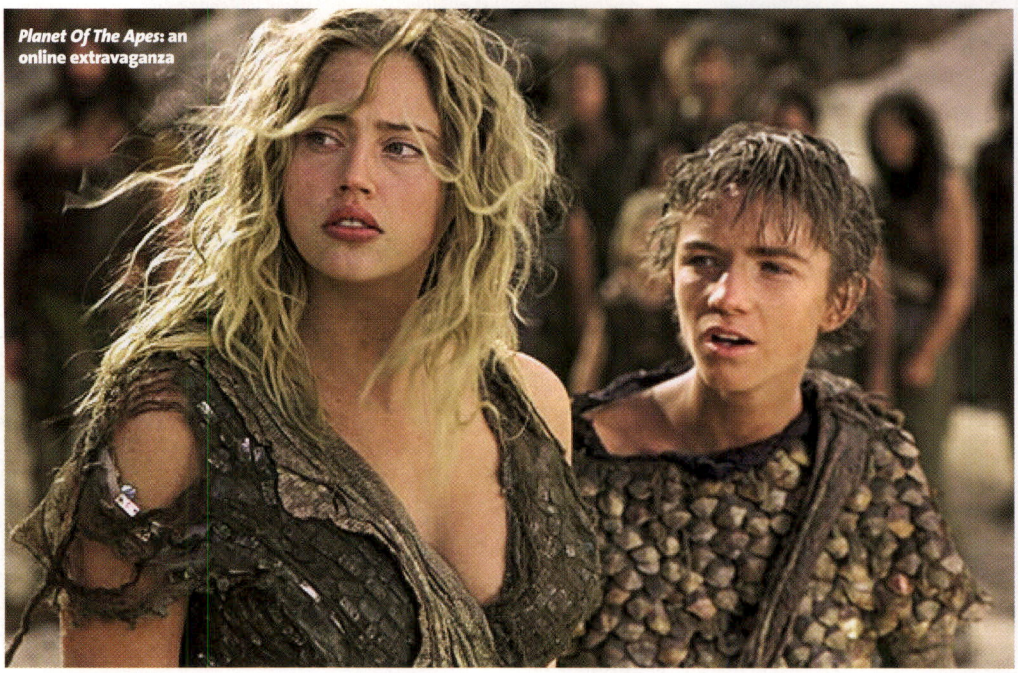
UBL: it's not called the Ultimate Band List for nothing, you know

NEED MORE? **Latest music sites** What's New p16
Useful music addresses The Directory p84

FOCUS:// Sci-fi

New adventures in sci-fi

Planet of the Apes explodes onto screens this month, so sci-fi is back with a bang – if it ever went away...



Planet Of The Apes: an online extravaganza

DOWNLOAD FREE STAR TREK DESKTOPS!
WELCOME TO STAR TREK.COM
Effects Shots Now Online!
Exclusive New Giveaway!
Look Back on Voyager's Journey!

Star Trek: a haven for avid Trekkies

STARWARS.COM

www.starwars.com ★★★★★

Though traditionally tight-lipped, LucasFilm has clearly realised that the Net plays an important part in *SW* fandom, and so has provided this superlative site. It's not only the ultimate guide to the space epic, it's also the best place to hear exclusive news about the forthcoming prequels. It's packed with loads of archival material and tantalising glimpses of the current films as well as a great celebration of the original ones. A veritable online encyclopaedia, even the most obscure elements are here. It's a thoroughly impressive piece of work and with regular updates from major production personnel (even Georgie L himself), it's keen to give the fans as much info as possible while harnessing the community potential of the franchise. A seriously mammoth resource.

STAR TREK CONTINUUM

www.startrek.com ★★★★

Like LucasFilm, Paramount has attempted to harness the Internet to its full potential by providing an astoundingly large database of information that perfectly caters to the brand's, erm, 'devoted' audience. Immediately entering in to the spirit of things with a design based around the show's computer consoles, the site is an online Bible of all things Trekular. While you can find out all the latest info (official – so no spoilers) on the fifth series *Enterprise*, interactive sections and the like, the site's real bonus is its encyclopaedic value, with the smallest details covered. It's also stuffed with (occasionally cheesy) editorial and features games like the chess-based 'Trekers'. The design is slightly off-putting at times but the site is so enormous, it's heavenly for the legions of fans.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

www.bttf.com ★★★★

The best fan sites are labour of love and BTTF.com is no exception: exceptionally well maintained and with detailed, entertaining content, this is a wonderful celebration of the 80s time-travel comedy. Where Are They Now? queries are swiftly dealt with as the site has kept tabs on the cast and even production staff. Details of the DVD and a minute-by-minute dissection of the trilogy are here with a host of interactive content. There's even a fan fiction crossover with TV's *Quantum Leap*. Although Part IV may never materialise, on the basis of this site the trilogy is alive and well.

SUPERMAN CINEMA

www.deceptions.net/superman

★★★★

Fact: *Superman: The Movie* was the best of the superhero movies. The sequels may have been weak, but judging by this enthusiastic, reverential and hugely detailed UK site, time has not dimmed the fans' affection for the original. Focusing mainly on the Christopher Reeve movies, but also the classic 40s/50s incarnations, the site is full to the brim with deep analysis and passionate remembrances of the beloved pants-wearer. Whether it be the alternate versions, the memorable soundtrack, the pioneering effects or the performances, no detail is spared and the site can claim to be an unparalleled guide. With its ever-growing archives of interviews, pictures, scripts and the like, you'll end up knowing so much about the films, you'll think you made them yourself.

WORDS: DANNY GRAYDON

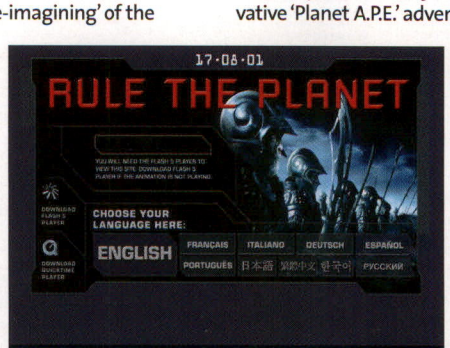
@ If you have to bookmark one...

PLANET OF THE APES

www.planetoftheapes.com ★★★★★

Tim Burton's highly-anticipated 're-imagining' of the beloved 1968 sci-fi classic promises a storming new version, with Chuck Heston's intrepid explorer replaced by the considerably more buffed Mark Wahlberg and well-dressed Roddy McDowall-toned apes exchanged for untold hordes of imperious, mean-looking ones including Helena Bonham-Carter. Advance buzz has been strong and the flashy official site will doubtless calm even the most doubting fan. If nothing else, the suitably atmospheric and futuristic design provides a glimpse into the film's astounding costumes and sets, with no small amount of pictures (including conceptual art), and an array of interviews alongside trailers and clips.

Perhaps the most eye-catching element is the innovative 'Planet A.P.E.' adventure for owners of Global Positioning Systems. The basic idea is for people to set up caches all over the world and share the co-ordinates of them on the Internet. GPS users can then use the location co-ordinates to find the caches. So, you can win prizes and make new international friends. While mention of the original is curiously absent, this packed site goes the distance to showcase what will surely be a mammoth epic.



Planet of the Apes: not too much monkey business

Superman: change for the phone box?

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY INTERNET ARCHIVE

www.palantir.net/2001 ★★★★

Light-sabres and The Force are all well and good, but for some, it's not Proper Science Fiction. Rejoice then, for this entertaining and intellectually stimulating site devoted to Kubrick's seminal SF classic. Want your PC to affect the eerie tones of murderous computer HAL 9000? Choose from scores of .wavs in the extensive sound gallery, while a large archive of interpretative essays and editorial coverage of the film's production will give you no shortage of discussion points. While Kubrick merchandise is not legion, there is a comprehensive listing of all available material on *2001*. A studious site pitched with little pizzazz, it's a great resource for devotees.

IGN FILM FORCE

www.filmforce.ign.com ★★★★

While rumour-mongering fan sites proliferate, IGN Film Force is one of the few sites whose professional coverage of SF movies is free of hysteria and whose information is usually on the money. While the main page provides an array of news about the latest in Hollywood, it's the door to a network of dozens of excellent micro-sites covering a plethora of SF movies from the much-anticipated *Lord of The Rings* to the long development hell-bound *Superman Lives*. Each is a goldmine of information, featuring scores of key interviews and the latest news/rumours. Your passion will also be fuelled by scores of entertaining editorial features, like the eclectic column The Stax Report. While clearly aimed at devotees, the accent is on easily located, excellent content rather than flashy design.

SPIDER-MAN HYPE!

www.spidermanhype.com

★★★★★

Undoubtedly one of the most hotly anticipated of 2002's releases, *Spider-Man* has been getting loads of online coverage – none better than this site, 'The CNN of Spider-Man's Internet World'. The sheer amount of information and calibre of the exclusives (first shots of Spidey's swanky costume etc) is simply staggering. An absolute must for those who like their spoilers thick and heavy, SMH features an unbelievable level of behind-the-scenes access, almost all of it done sneakily. An array of forums are available for teeming fanboys to discuss all the minutiae, while there is no shortage of images and fan-made downloadables.

ASSIGNMENT X

www.assignmentx.com ★★★

The new online home of top US genre magazine *Cinescape* easily has widespread coverage of not just SF movies, but comics, books, games and TV. Assignment X really scores with its up-to-the-minute news coverage, with an average of a dozen new stories per day, bringing you the stories of all the major SF projects. Very professional and generally free of fanboy over-enthusiasm, the site is complemented by a series of excellent fan-run sub-sites devoted to the giants of SF; disseminate until you're blue in the face with the heaving forums.

Type it
www. .cc GO!
SPIDER-MAN Hype!
"This one's the CNN of Spider-Man's Internet world."
- Entertainment Weekly
310 days 09:25
'TIL SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE
LATEST NEWS
CAST & CREW
DISCUSSION
SPIDER-MEDIA
DOWNLOADS
MERCHANDISE
EDITORIALS
ARTICLES
WEB LINKS
CONTACT US
ABOUT US
FAQs
The Movie: Orphaned at an early age, Peter Parker lives in Queens, New York with his beloved Aunt May and Uncle Ben. Peter leads the life of a normal student, working as a photographer at the Daily Bugle under the tutelage of publisher J. Jonah Jameson, pining after the beautiful Mary Jane Watson and hanging out with his buddy Harry Osborn. On a school trip, during which Peter and his classmates are given a science demonstration on spiders, Peter is bitten by a genetically altered spider. Soon after, he discovers that he has unusual powers... [Full Plot Summary]
S-MH! Forums | Amazing Spider-Man | Ultimate Spider-Man | Ultimate Marvel
Got Any Spider-Man Movie News Or Rumors? Contact Us!
Hot off the Press:
EXCLUSIVE: New Green Goblin & Glider Pics! - who's the baddest of them all?
Official Spider-Man Teaser Poster Online!! - check it out!
THE LATEST NEWS!
Contribute:
Help Spider-Man Hype! stay afloat during the
Spider-Man: well, you'd have expected him to adapt easily to the Web (sorry)

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

Guardian Unlimited
YOUR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE
The UK's most popular newspaper website
Login
Go to: Guardian Unlimited home Go
film
Home | News | Reviews | Now showing | Features | Interviews | Sites we like | Help
Talk | Games | On video | Mood matcher | Search | Brits in film | Trailer park
Jack Lemmon: 1925-2001 A life in pictures
Dreams of green The DreamWorks team on the making of Shrek
Bonfire of the vanities
Friday June 29 2001
What's on near me?
Enter your postcode
Go
Film search
Go
You're looking for a seedy wisecracker? No problem.
Interview: Steve Buscemi, workaholic emblem of indie cinema talks to Michael Ellison in New York
More about Animal Factory
www.co.uk
The UK's biggest video store
Romance Movies
bol.com
click here
Guardian Film: as black as the inside of a cinema during a power failure

MOVIE NEWS AND RELEASE DATES

The Internet Movie Database (IMDb)
uk.imdb.com
The bible of online film – use the search engine or be lost.

Hollywood.com
www.hollywood.com
The latest gossip from the star-lined streets.

Mr Showbiz: Movie Index
mrshowbiz.go.com/reviews/moviereviews/index.html
Find out what's playing and what's coming up at this competent site with a discerning edge.

MOVIE REVIEWS

Guardian Unlimited Film
film.guardian.co.uk
Detailed and intelligent reviews for new and recent releases.

Popcorn.co.uk
www.popcorn.co.uk
Easy-to-find DVD and video reviews including pictures.

Movie Review Query Engine
www.mrqe.com
Check the received wisdom on more than 19,000 films.

The Trailer Park
www.movie-trailers.com
Trailers for all the newest films.

CINEMA LISTINGS AND DIRECTORIES

UCI Cinemas
www.cineworld.co.uk
Find out what's playing, as well as what's on sale in the kiosk here.

Virgin Net – Movies
www.virgin.net/movies
Takes the hassle out of organising a trip to the cinema.

Cineworld – Multiplex Cinema
www.cineworld.co.uk
UK film portal that also includes a cinema finder.

Get the gossip at Hollywood.com

OFFICIAL FILM RESOURCES

Fox Movies
www.foxmovies.com
Provides links to all 20th Century Fox releases.

Miramax Café
www.miramax.com
Links to all Miramax releases, plus general movie news.

Warner Bros Online
www.movies.warnerbros.com
Site featuring WB's new films and lost classics.

ONLINE SHORTS

Atom Films
www.atomfilms.com
Shockwave-only shorts.

Britshorts
www.britshorts.com
British and European mini-films.

NEWSGROUP

rec.arts.sf.movies
Would a hole in a space ship really kill you? Ask someone here.

MAILING LIST

Fancy tongue-in-cheek sci-fi movies news? Subscribe by emailing ***sfmagazine-subscribe@topica.com***; George Lucas and Steven Spielberg have done already.

CHAT ROOM

www.film-philosophy.com
Read and discuss film articles.

NEED MORE? **This month's movie sites** Site Insider p16
Entertainment addresses The Directory p84

FOCUS:// UK transport

A to B, easy as 1-2-3...

The Net can help you find your way anywhere in these isles. You'll have to find your nearest PC yourself

Spending train fare on tartan bags is a mistake

@UK

www.atuk.co.uk ★★★★

This was the most complete listing of links that we found for anyone interested in getting somewhere in the UK. On this accessible site, each county, major city, tourist region and (major) island is covered in detail, allowing you to select where you want to go from a huge choice – and then what suits you for getting there, what to do and where to stay once you've arrived. It includes links to bus, coach and train sites, letting you book online, and there's access to a chat room if you have a more obscure travel question. There are also links to weather forecasts, courtesy of the Met Office, and maps can be viewed or purchased online.

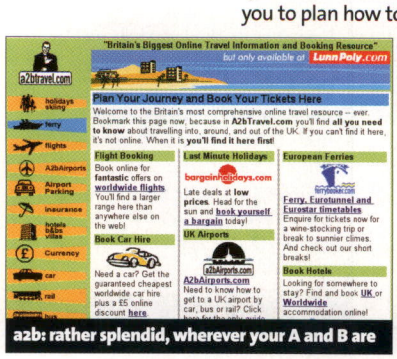
@ If you have to bookmark one...

A2BTRAVEL.COM

www.a2btravel.com ★★★★★

This site claims to be 'Britain's Biggest Online Travel Information and Booking Resource' and we could find no site to challenge that claim. You can plan your journey and book tickets; discover how to reach a UK airport by coach, bus or rail; travel round the country by train on the most suitable routes and get the latest train information, including the timetables and fares. When we typed in that we wanted to travel from Aberdeen to Aberystwyth leaving at 9am the next day, we were given four choices within seconds, including departure and arrival times, and length of journey (10 and a quarter hours being the quickest!). a2b also allows you to plan how to use the London Underground to make getting about the capital easier than you ever thought it could be. Links to the UK's rail and bus companies are excellent, and there's also a complete list of the UK's Heritage Railways for those who travel in old-fashioned style.

And if you're getting about by bus or coach and need to know when you're likely to arrive, there's traffic news. Great, easy to navigate site design too – if only it was this easy to get around the UK...



a2b: rather splendid, wherever your A and B are

THE UK TRAVEL GUIDE

www15.pair.com/cir ★★★★

This site offers a gateway to many of the most useful travel Web sites in the United Kingdom, including travel news, weather, maps, and a comprehensive A to Z Guide, featuring loads of essential details about getting out and about in the UK – from timetables and fares to places to stay in your desired destination. It's especially useful for its London Guide which offers pointers on how to get around the London Underground (without dying of dehydration) and an Active London Map; a point-and-click affair highlighting many interesting places and underground stations across London with local information, including buses. And on the same theme, there's an Active Map to more than 100 cities and tourist attractions around the UK.

TRAVELFROMHERE.COM

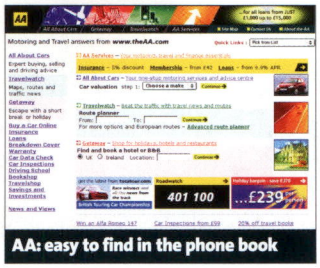
www.travelfromhere.com/framebuses.htm ★★★

Not the greatest design we've ever seen, but a very useful 'Search' facility enabling users to select how to get from A to B – especially useful for those travelling by coaches and buses. The relevant section lists most bus and coach companies and contacts for them, and in many cases you can get times and tickets online in addition to discovering local routes to reach many off-the-beaten-track places. Major towns and cities are covered very well, but we stumped the site when we requested how to get to Land's End by bus or coach. Companies listed include bus and coach firms that provide spaces for bikes and others that have vehicles accessible to people in wheelchairs.

KASBAH

Kasbah.co.uk ★★★★

If we were really forced to criticise this excellent site, we could only do so by saying that it is almost too busy (but thankfully, it's an attractive design that's easy to get around). Every city and region in the UK is covered in fine detail in its 'Search' facility. For example, we tapped in Dorset and received more than 400 links to check out – which included rail, sea and air travel to, from and around destinations as



AA: easy to find in the phone book

well as local maps and tourist board contacts. Up-to-the-minute possible travel delays on road and rail can be found, as well as weather likely to affect journeys. That'll be 'wrong type of snow on the track'.

THE AA

www.theaa.com ★★★

If you are using buses or coaches, you should visit this site first so that your gran or lover isn't waiting for you at the bus station for several days while you're stuck beside a lane full of cones on the motorway. Obviously designed with the car lover in mind, it's still an invaluable asset for coach and bus users. You can access latest road problems and get free email alerts on the latest traffic problems on your route. Also seek out Travelwatch for the best route and access maps of your journey. In addition, this is a very good site for booking accommodation for when you arrive – a practical idea if roadwork warnings are likely to cause your arrival to be the other side of midnight.

NATIONAL RAIL

www.nationalrail.co.uk ★★★

The site is as interminably plodding as the rail network, but at least it has all the information you could want for UK train travel, including train times, fares, promotions and passenger news. Crucially for rail travellers in this country, it also has train running information which details late arrivals. There's also useful links to other rail sites, including Eurostar, Docklands Light Railway and the amazing Croydon Tramlink.

All Other Information is worth looking at too, with details ranging from Pets and Luggage to Connections and Rail/Sea crossings. Not sure if it's up and running on strike days, though – and it would have earned more stars had it sold tickets online rather than pointing out links to sites that do. Surely it wouldn't take too much effort...

STREETMAP.CO.UK

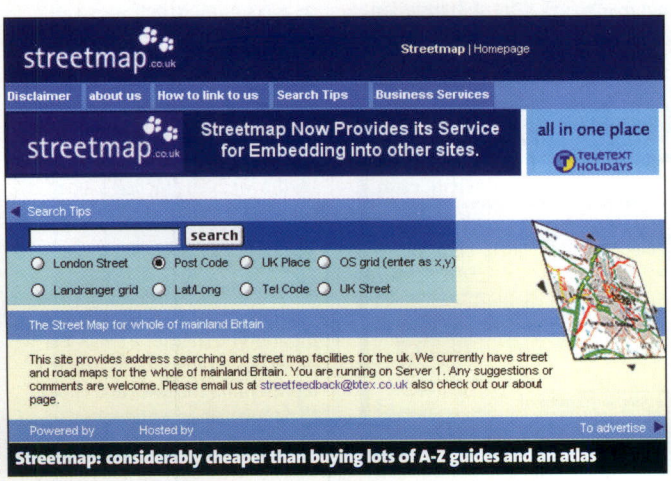
www.streetmap.co.uk ★★★★★

Absolutely invaluable, with street and road maps in clear colour for the whole of mainland Britain. Search for the specific area you want by street, post code, phone code or even latitude and longitude (if you're a pilot or an orienteer) and a detailed map will appear which you can easily print out and store away for when you're roaming the streets of a strange new town. It has a zoom facility too, so maps can be as detailed as you want just by clicking on the area you want to see. Many of the maps also have matching aerial photos if you want to see in the back gardens – helpful if you need to know whether to take a parasol to auntie's barbecue.

GOBYCOACH.COM

www.gobycoach.com ★★★

Plan a journey by coach and book a ticket through this site. National Express coaches go to about 1,200 destinations throughout Britain, including many airports, so you should be able to reach your chosen place. Fill in where and when you want to go and all journey details, including time of journey, will be revealed. There's also relevant information on discounts for families, lone parents, students, young people and the older generation, plus a useful FAQ section which will tell you what you can take on coaches, how to get discounts, when tickets will be posted out to you or where to collect them from and what to do if you miss your coach (other than panic).



Streetmap: considerably cheaper than buying lots of A-Z guides and an atlas

WORDS: DAVID HURST; PICTURE: PA

@CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

Guardian Travel: more sound advice from everyone's top online paper

TOP ONLINE FLIGHT DEALS

Avro
www.avro.co.uk
Low-cost flights to the Med.

MyOwnPrice.com
www.myownprice.com
This site asks how much you're prepared to pay and then tries to match it. Very useful.

Deckchair UK
www.deckchair.com
Comprehensive flight-finder.

CheapFlights.com
www.cheapflights.com
Where thrifty surfers go for flights, packages and late deals.

Cheapflights: comprehensive

DESTINATION INFO

Rough Guides
www.roughguides.com
From the publishers of the well-established guidebooks.

Lonely Planet Online
www.lonelyplanet.com
Let the travel experts guide you around your destination.

Beeb.com – BBC Holiday
www.holiday.beeb.com
Offers advice on everything you'll need for a perfect break.

Guardian Unlimited Travel
travel.guardian.co.uk
Wordy site with eco-friendly tips.

Bugbog
www.bugbog.co.uk
Impartial info and honest photos.

ACCOMMODATION

Holidayleaders.com
www.holidayleaders.com
A global directory of villas to rent.

CottageNet UK
www.cottage-net.ndirect.co.uk
Self-catering database for the UK and Ireland.

Smooth Hound Systems
www.smoothhound.co.uk
Cheap UK B&Bs and hotels.

LAST-MINUTE BREAKS

Lastminute.com
www.lastminute.com
The original and still the best for every kind of last-minute escape.

Shenfield Travel
www.shenfieldtravel.co.uk
A thorough site packed with great deals. No online booking.

ROUTE PLANNERS

Shell Geostar
www.shellgeostar.com
European route planner complete with details of service stations with loos.

Michelin Travel
www.michelin-travel.com
Everything you'd expect from the top name in tourist guides.

NEWSGROUP

uk.transport.london
Rant and rave with other users.

MAILING LIST

Discuss ideas for alternative transport by subscribing to the Alt-transport list via ***www.topica.com***.

NEED MORE? Useful travel addresses The Directory p84

FOCUS:// Musical instruments

Play a song for me

Ever fancied plucking, plonking or paradiddling? These sites will help you make sweet music in no time

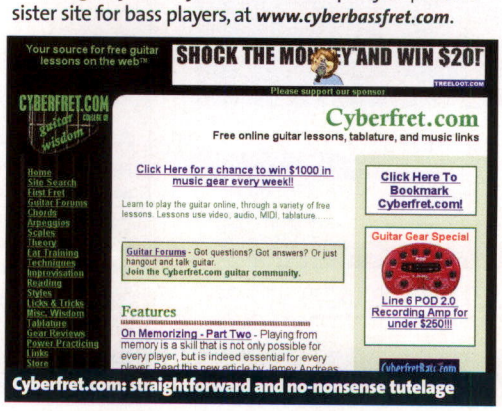
Patience is a virtue when learning guitar

@ If you have to bookmark one...

CYBERFRET

www.cyberfret.com ★★★★★

Dubbing itself the 'college of guitar wisdom', Cyberfret offers the kind of clear and comprehensive lessons that you'd expect from an established educational institution. The straightforward, no-nonsense texts are just what you need when you're trying to get to grips with the complexities of chords, strumming and music theory all at the same time, and photographs and short audio and video files provide helpful illustrations to many points, such as correct left-hand position and smooth transitions between chords – both essential for a truly professional sound. A clear, unfussy layout, in lessons that assume nothing of pupils except an enthusiasm for their instrument, will help new musicians to make head and tail of the mysteries of music notation and chord tablature, and once you've mastered the basics the site is chock full with resources to help you improve your skills enough to attempt the guide to improvisation and lay down some tasty lines from Licks and Tricks. As with other US sites, you'll need to consult Nina Gilbert's dictionary-style guide to British vs. American Musical Terms on About.com (***www.about.com***) to get a British translation of the US terminology. And if you don't fancy tackling six strings, try four: Cyberfret has an equally impressive sister site for bass players, at ***www.cyberbassfret.com***.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Guitar Gear Special
Guitar Forums - Got questions? Got answers? Or just hangout and talk guitar. Join the Cyberfret.com guitar community.
Line 6 POD 2.0 Recording Amp for under $250!!!
Features
On Memorizing - Part Two - Playing from memory is a skill that is not only possible for every player, but is indeed essential for every
Home
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Guitar Forums
Chords
Arpeggios
Scales
Theory
Ear Training
Techniques
Improvisation
Reading
Styles
Licks & Tricks
Misc. Wisdom
Tablature
Gear Reviews
Power Practicing
Links
Store

Cyberfret.com: straightforward and no-nonsense tutelage

WHOLENOTE

www.wholenote.com ★★★★★

Being a truly accomplished guitarist takes more than playing the chords to your favourite songs, though if that's all you want you'll find chords and tablature for just about every song you could want at WholeNote. While the site's massive chord and scale directories are an essential reference source, beginners should clock the 300 lessons on guitar technique and music theory, plus the basics – how to strum and how chords are constructed. The lessons aren't given in any discernible order, so you'll need to pick out the ones that suit your needs. Most pages include sound files to illustrate their main points, and you can tailor these so that they're played at a certain speed, a certain number of times, and by the fake guitar sound that most tickles your fancy. The only disappointment is the lack of visual aids, which are a helpful extra on other sites. As with Cyberfret, WholeNote has a more manageable sister site for bass players at ***www.activebass.com***.

THE DRUM CLUB

www.thedrumclub.com ★★★★★

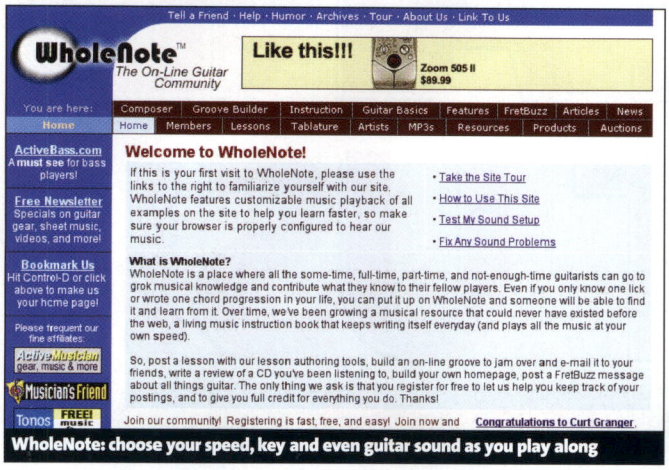
Follow them closely and the lessons in the Drumset section of The Drum Club should soon get even an absolute beginner playing their kit like an old hand. No detail is missed, whether it's the different parts of a drumstick, how to make the perfect stroke, coordinating snare, ride-cymbal and bass-drum, or reading music. Each element is introduced clearly, though the Ali G patois used to inject humour becomes a little irritating. Many of the lessons are based on author Mark Wessel's books, with the online bonus of QuickTime video demonstrations and Real Audio providing a narrated version (in his distinctly Deep South US drawl). Even practice is aided, by Midi files to play along to.

SONGPLAYER.COM

www.songplayer.com ★★★

Songplayer is an online software programme that, for a small fee, provides guitarists with graphics representing the lyrics and chords to popular albums and songs so you can play along. A demonstration comes as part of a short but

WORDS: ALEX NEWBY; PICTURE: CORBIS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How to Use This Site
Test My Sound Setup
Fix Any Sound Problems
What is WholeNote?
Join our community! Registering is fast, free, and easy! Join now and
Congratulations to Curt Granger.
WholeNote: choose your speed, key and even guitar sound as you play along

effective beginner's guitar course. A nice Yorkshire lady talks you through the lessons which, in addition to photographs of hand positions and videos illustrating the lessons on strumming techniques, use the Songplayer Chord player – a window which shows you where to put your fingers to play a chord, and lets you hear how it should sound. It's a quick and easy way to learn to play chords without having to read music or tablature, and once you've memorised them you'll have the tools to write a few ditties yourself.

NETMUSIC SCHOOL

www.netmusicschool.com ★★★★

While Netmusicschool's easy-to-use guitar chord database and gentle introductions to standard notation and guitar tablature are free, you have to pay for full acoustic guitar or piano courses. But at $15.95 for eight lessons, it should be worth forking out for if you're serious. Try the sample lessons if you're unsure: they assume little of the pupil except a little intelligence and an instrument to hand, and we liked the neat white-gloved hands of its animated character, Sticky, accompanied by audio examples and a warm-voiced narrator. It's unlikely this little course will make you a Liberace or a Jeff Beck, but there's a patient calm to the site that encourages you.

WEBTHUMPER

www.webthumper.com ★★★★

Beginners would benefit from more detail in the Introduction to Drumming at Webthumper, and until the promised videos are added there are no visual aids on playing technique. But once you're through to the first drum patterns in the Novice section, you'll quickly get a better picture of how rhythmic notation works. Webthumper's pride lies in its hundreds of notated drum patterns for all standards of player, each with an audio file. You'll get more from the site if you can already read music, but it will improve your familiarity with drum patterns. Test yourself in the Drum Transcription section, where novices can tap from Britney to Metallica.

A nice Yorkshire lady talks you through the lessons

DIGEVENT

www.digevent.com ★★★

US multimedia company Digevent has archives of live guitar and drum lessons (Drumbeat and Guitar Mania, in 'View a Digevent') presented by musicians Dave Hall and Marc Seal. Scan the list of specialised lessons of varying but mostly intermediate standard (such as Reading Rhythms, Rock Drumming for the Beginner and Odd Groupings of Triplets) for one that suits your current needs, then listen to the audio broadcast which accompanies the written music that appears. It's a pity not to have the option to watch a video broadcast of the show as well, but this would make the streaming even slower for narrowband users.

PIANONANNY

www.pianonanny.com ★★★

Since most pianists are able to read music, Pianonanny sensibly introduces this side by side with the piano keyboard. Basic music theory takes up most of the beginner's section, and there are constant tests and quizzes to make sure you've taken it all in. There's a bit of a jump from the simple guides of both the beginner and intermediate sections to the advanced one, which dives suddenly into the wonders of jazz improvisation, but the early lessons make for an easy and useful initiation into basic piano knowledge.

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

FIND A COURSE

Hotcourses
www.hotcourses.com
Enormous directory featuring everything from puppetry to earth science.

Learn Free
www.learnfree.com
Free online courses using videos.

LEARN ABOUT COMPUTERS

About Computing
home.about.com/compute
A vast amount of information on every aspect of computing.

Learn That
www.learnthat.com
General site including computing help for beginners and novices.

ENCYLOPAEDIAS

Online Dictionaries, Glossaries and Encylopedias
stommel.tamu.edu/~baum/hyperref.html
Large list of online resources.

Webopedia
www.pcwebopedia.com
Specialises in IT topics.

Funkand Wagnalls.com
www.funkandwagnalls.com
Selection of historical articles and a perspective on modern events.

CONVERTERS AND SYMBOLS

MegaConverter 2
www.megaconverter.com/mega2
Convert just about any measurement to another.

Symbols.com
www.symbols.com
Online list of graphic symbols you never quite understood.

EXAM RESOURCES

Topmarks Education
www.topmarks.co.uk
Help with hundreds of topics for students of all ages.

Revisiontime.com
www.revisiontime.com
Useful links for various subjects.

Schoolsnet
www.schoolsnet.com
Award-winning education site for students, parents and teachers.

QUOTATIONS AND PROVERBS

Bartleby.com
www.bartleby.com
Quotes to spice up essays, letters and speeches.

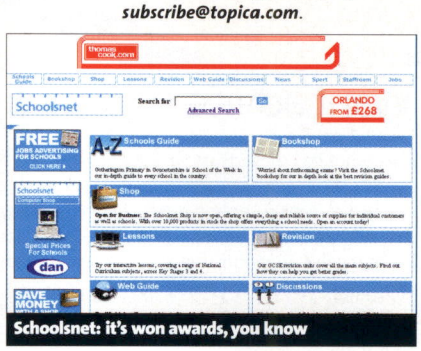
Famous Quotations Network
www.famous-quotations.com
Search for quotations by country or author.

NEWSGROUP

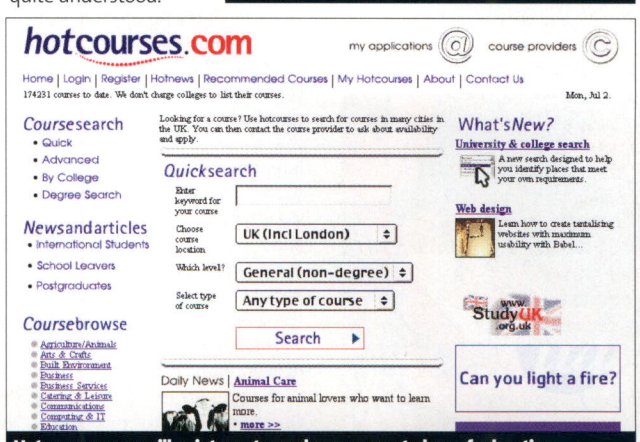
rec.music.makers.percussion
A place for drummers to talk shop about paradiddles, crashes, rides, rimshots and triplets.

MAILING LIST

Guitarists can swap tips and tricks with professionals and amateurs alike by emailing ***guitar-players-subscribe@topica.com***.



Schoolsnet: it's won awards, you know



Hotcourses.com: will point you toward your nearest place of education

NEED MORE? Useful addresses for kids The Directory p84

COME AND MEET US!

Want advice straight from the experts? Come and talk to us at Live 2001

The Internet has moved fast. In just a few years, it has transformed from an exclusive club presenting ugly, plain text pages to the fun-packed, fully interactive adventure we all know today. And it keeps changing by the minute, placing new demands on your connection, your software and your knowhow.

Which is why we're offering a free advice service to visitors at Live 2001, the UK's biggest consumer electronics show, to be held at Birmingham's NEC between 21 and 23 September. Come along and *the net* team will be on hand every day to solve your problems – be it choosing the right ISP, deciding whether to go broadband, or simply ensuring the software handling your browsing and email is the best it can be.

And while you're at the show, you can catch up on a host of other new technologies. This year sees the launch of the always-on mobile Internet in the form of GPRS; manufacturers are unveiling a wealth of next-generation handsets, and most of the operators are rolling out new GPRS pricing packages (BT has already announced its pricing for the service – others will soon follow).

The service promises Internet heaven: with GPRS, email and rich Web pages are only a click away. Or at least that's the promise: come and judge for yourself at Live.

Meanwhile, the growth in broadband has fuelled interest in online gaming, and soon Sony and Microsoft are to go head-to-head in cyberspace, Sony with its online facility for PlayStation 2 and Microsoft with the launch of Xbox. Sega has withdrawn from console manufacturer and concentrated instead on what it does best: involving, exciting games.

Aside from *the net*, you'll also find stands dedicated to our sister publications, *Stuff* and *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision*. Featuring the hottest new gadgets for the discerning male, *Stuff* will be showcasing its newly announced Awards at the Show, which promise to range from must-have PDAs to drop-dead gorgeous laptops. *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision*, meanwhile, will be on hand to give advice on choosing and buying your hi-fi and surround sound systems, as well as giving state-of-the-art demonstrations of new products on their stand.

Get your advice from the magazine with the answers – put 21-23 September in your diary now.

LIVE
THE HOME ELECTRONICS SHOW
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I figured it was the safest way for my parents to meet my new boyfriend.

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- Enjoy video-chatting
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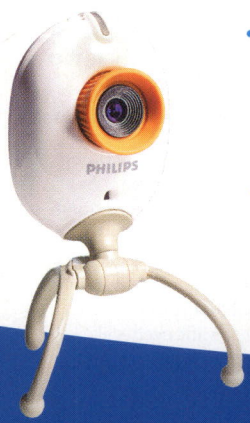

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PHILIPS

Let's make things better.

FOCUS:// Genealogy

Find yourself a whole new family

Discover roots you never knew you had when you build an online family tree

Extended families: expensive

PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE

www.pro.gov.uk ★★★★★

The PRO's site describes its contents as 'The National Archives' and you can't argue with that. It was founded in 1838 (the PRO, not the site) to preserve records of births, marriages and deaths and, of course, the 10-yearly censuses; all records are online here, although census returns are only released to the public 101 years later (so the 1901 census will be available on the first working day of next year). The business end of the site for genealogists is at ***www.familyrecords.gov.uk***: wills, parish registers, military records, adoption, they're all available on the Net instead of having to traipse to the PRO's amazingly ugly concrete block in Kew. No bad thing.

ROOTSWEB

www.rootsweb.com ★★★★

Is size everything? Well it doesn't hurt when RootsWeb, which claims to have more records than any other site, indexes more than 22,000 genealogy mailing lists. There are lists for hundreds of individual surnames, review e-zines, boards and plenty of guides for the first-time genealogist. But if your keyboard fingers are itching to type in grandad's name, sling it in the 'Search RootsWeb.com' engine at the top and you'll get a breakdown of returns across dozens of databases including births, marriages and deaths in several US states and other countries. Like all such conglomerates, the site does lack a bit of focus but more than makes up for that in its exhaustive inclusivity.

ANCESTRY.COM

ancestry.com ★★★★

Although it describes itself with the rather woolly and difficult to quantify 'The most popular genealogy and family history site', Ancestry.com celebrated in January when its number of searchable records passed the one billion mark. Some of these are on branches of the Ancestry World Tree, which holds more than 83 million names; however, to gain access to 700 million names you have to pay $25 every three months – a bit of a swizz, perhaps, but we did warn you that many see genealogy as a business. It's even more off-putting if you aren't looking for US relatives or ancestors, as the vast majority of records are from the States. Still, the limited amount of free use you can get from Ancestry.com – birth and death dates plus immediate ancestors/descendants – may be of use to start your quest.

GENEALOGY.COM

www.genealogy.com ★★★

The temptation to make your Web site cutesy is one to which all too many site owners succumb. Certainly Genealogy has taken advantage of its first-guess URL to present a hand-holding, graphic-heavy approach to family history, going large on the line drawings as section pointers. For instance, you get to the introductory 'First Steps' by clicking on an antique pram and start your ancestor hunt by clicking on a treasure chest. But stylistic quibbles aside, Genealogy certainly does the job. Unlike many others, it cleverly sorts the results from surname-only searches into all known first names to help you refine your reviews. The filing system continues into the awesome forum (***genforum.genealogy.com***), which catalogues mailing lists and newsgroups, running into the thousands, by surnames.

@ If you have to bookmark one...

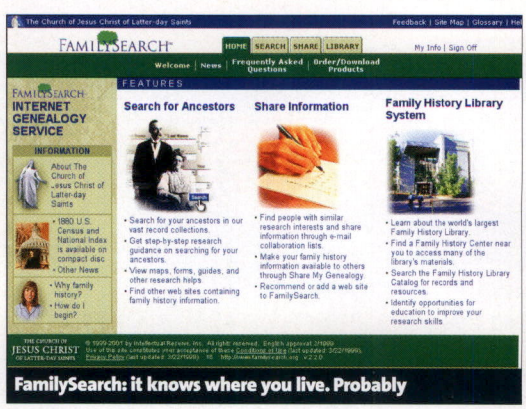
thenet GOLD AWARD

FAMILYSEARCH

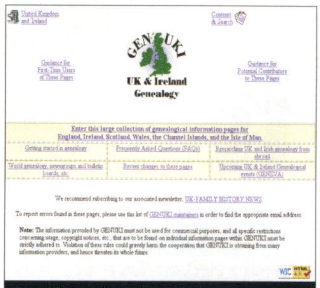
www.familysearch.org ★★★★★

Good old Mormons. Those who belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints believe that departed souls should be honoured and celebrated, and as such the Church has the world's largest collection of genealogical material – around 2 billion names in a vault under a Utah mountain. And now the faith that brought us the Osmonds is repaying the debt by gradually putting these records online – for free. The result is FamilySearch, which grants access to the 300 million names so far in the International Genealogical Index for no pence. At a time when many are realising the financial potential of online genealogy, the Mormons' benevolence has helped halt those wanting to cash in on ancestral curiosity.

It's not hard to search for distant relatives – just click Search. You can choose how many options to fill in (first name, last name, spouse, parents) and you can search for specific events like births, marriages and deaths. And not only can you take away from this mountain of information, you can also add your own by uploading your family tree to the Pedigree Resource File; the Mormons will very kindly burn it onto a CD and lock it in their mountain vault for the rest of time. FamilySearch is an invaluable first resource for genealogists everywhere.



WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES



Genuki: no Americans allowed

GENUKI

www.genuki.org.uk ★★★★

Time and again when searching the Web for family history, the UK-based genealogist comes up against US-centric sites which bury any possible forebears under a welter of Louisianans and Vermontians. Although it sounds like a cartoon spin-off from *Godzilla*, Genuki is a collection of UK-specific databases and information on all things genealogical. This allows British and Irish users to concentrate on results from these isles, whether searching by even more closely-defined region or by surname. Surnames and regions are even cross-referenced for extra ease of use. Weighing against Genuki is the site's tendency to lead you down blind alleys of multiple clicks – do you really need to see maps of Leeds if you know where you're searching? – but it's a site that's well worth a peep.

UK GENEALOGY

www.ukgenealogy.co.uk ★★★★

UK Genealogy is never going to be entered in an art exhibition: the colourful layout has the design-in-a-day feel of the amateur site about it. But that's not to denigrate UK Genealogy at all – amateur sites are often the best on the Web. And any UK residents interested in tracing ancestors will find nothing shoddy about the quality of information here. Check your home country and you'll find further subdivisions into counties; within these you'll find addresses and links to every archive, library and registration office you could ever need. If you want online interaction, there are surname lists within the region with email addresses of those who have information about that family – but might be interested in more...

CYNDI'S LIST

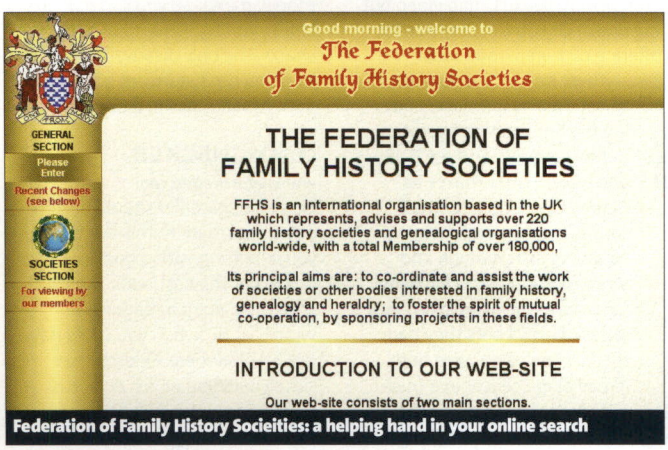
www.cyndislist.com ★★★★

Here's more proof that bedroom Web sites can gain recognition: our May issue lauded amateur genealogist Cyndi Howells in our list of the Internet's Top 25 home-grown sites. And rightly so, as Cyndi's List is the fruits of Ms Howells' decision to share her knowledge of thousands of genealogy links with the Web, and in the intervening five years it has organically grown into one of the biggest resources on the Net. The format is simple – check out registrar lists of births, marriages, deaths, marriages and census returns – but the homeliness of the site and Cyndi's nice touches around the pages make a welcome break from the impersonal nature of some other genealogy sites.

THE FEDERATION OF FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES

www.ffhs.org.uk ★★★

Once you've got yourself elbow-deep in Internet searches for your ancestral history, you may find it's not as easy as you'd imagined. The thing to do then is not to panic, but to get in touch with others in your area who might be able to help. Enter the FFHS, an international (but UK-based) organisation collating more than 200 family history societies. You might like to meet them or simply email them, but to be in touch with others searching for information on the same surname can be no bad thing. The site itself, while pleasant enough, is no great shakes – but it's the people behind it who'll help you find your long lost elusive Aunty Nora. Remember, the Internet is nothing without the people who make it all happen...


Good morning - welcome to
The Federation
of Family History Societies
GENERAL SECTION
Please Enter
Recent Changes (see below)
SOCIETIES SECTION
For viewing by our members
THE FEDERATION OF FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES
FFHS is an international organisation based in the UK which represents, advises and supports over 220 family history societies and genealogical organisations world-wide, with a total Membership of over 180,000,
Its principal aims are: to co-ordinate and assist the work of societies or other bodies interested in family history, genealogy and heraldry; to foster the spirit of mutual co-operation, by sponsoring projects in these fields.
INTRODUCTION TO OUR WEB-SITE
Our web-site consists of two main sections.
Federation of Family History Socieities: a helping hand in your online search

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

THE HISTORY CHANNEL
Visit www.seat.co.uk to find out why.
SEAT auto emoción
home features on tv debate this day photos news events contact
THE HISTORY CHANNEL ONLINE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
Refugee Week
To coincide with Refugee Week, 23-29 June, we explore the history of asylum and draw attention to events taking place around the country.
The History of Wimbledon
With Wimbledon now in full swing, we take a look at the history of the famous tournament and give you the chance to win some fantastic prizes.
The Windsors
The Windsors have provided us with the greatest soap opera of the 20th century. Enter our competition to win the book that accompanies our new series.
This week's poll
Who do you think is the greatest Briton? Queen Victoria won last week's heat.
Winston Churchill
Alexander Fleming
Emmeline Pankhurst
Steven Redgrave
vote
The History Channel Newsletter
ucreate History
June 28, 2001
search game shop study stop events site map
The History Channel: available on satellite, cable, digital and your desktop

BRITISH HISTORY

The History Channel
www.thehistorychannel.co.uk
Resource guide and forum from the cable and satellite channel.

British History
www.great-britain.co.uk/history/history.htm Like a huge textbook online; concise but fun – honest.

BBC Online
www.bbc.co.uk/history
Inspiring and accessible – if only history lessons had been like this.

WORLD HISTORY

History World
www.historyworld.net
New and comprehensive site from the pen of University Challenge MC Bamber Gascoigne.

Trenches on the Web
www.ibiscom.com
A large and growing reference library covering every aspect of the Great War.

ANNIVERSARIES

On This Day
www.on-this-day.com
Birthdays, musical and miscellaneous historical events that took place on the date of your choice.

Those Were the Days
www.44oint.com/twt
Search by date for birthdays and miscellanous – though often American – historical events.

Info Please
www.infoplease.com/cgi-bin/dayinhistory
Key events for the day's history, with links to relevant info.

This Day in Football
www.thisdayinfootball.co.uk
Today's football history, plus facts.

ORAL ACCOUNTS

Eyewitness
www.ibiscom.com
First-hand written and oral accounts of historical world events, with a noticeably American bias.

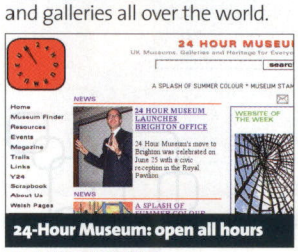
BBC Online
www.bbc.co.uk/education/20cvox
An extensive archive of aural recordings from BBC programmes.

MUSEUM DIRECTORIES

24-Hour Museum
www.24hourmuseum.org.uk
Search for museums, galleries and other heritage sites across the UK.

Artguide
www.artguide.org
Even if you don't know what you like, come here to find details of the nation's public art collections.

Museum Network
www.museumnetwork.org
Massive directory giving basic details for over 33,000 museums and galleries all over the world.



24-Hour Museum: open all hours

NEWSGROUP

soc.genealogy.britain
Post messages here to receive clues to your family history.

MAILING LIST

New to this genealogy lark? Don't worry, you can receive helpful advice and guidance by emailing ***genealogy_help-subscribe@topica.com***

CHAT

genforum.genealogy.com
Searching for your lost auntie? Ask around here for far-flung relatives you never knew you had.

NEED MORE? **Hundreds of addresses** The Directory p84

FOCUS:// Gambling

Put your house on it

Wagering online has never been more popular – and there are plenty of different ways to bet

Gambling: both big and clever, apparently

Blue Square: from horses to hamsters

BLUE SQUARE

www.bluesq.com ★★★★★

This site is an old favourite; we've already given it a five-star rating and best betting site gong but it's worth revisiting. It's essential if you want hassle-free betting with the emphasis on British sports. There's now no tax to pay on your bets but punters keep the security of betting with a reputable British firm. And their wacky bets program has been expanded, with live streaming coverage of hamster racing – it could catch on. The basics stay the same though; a clean, cool look, easy navigation and good functionality, with easy access to your account, betting history and outstanding wagers. The betting is all simple fixed-odds stuff but there's a huge choice of bets to make. It now claims to be the biggest online bookie, and it certainly deserves to be.

IG INDEX

www.igsport.com ★★★★

This is the firm run by eccentric millionaire Stuart Wheeler, who donated £5 million to the Tories just before the election. You might think his appalling inability to spot a donkey when he sees one would make him an ideal man to make money off, but think twice; IG is one of the biggest spread betting firms around with the slickest, most accessible online sports service. Spread betting is done on values. For example, in a rugby match your bookie might offer you a spread of between 20 and 23 points for England. If you think they'll score more, you buy the position at, say, £10 per point. You get a tenner for every extra point they score, but lose one for every point they fall short by. Big rewards, but beware – there are big risks too.

IG Index: spread your winnings

PARADISE POKER

www.paradisepoker.com ★★★★

The great advantage of poker over some of the other activities we look at here is that you're playing against other punters and not against the casino or a bookie. The odds aren't stacked against you and skill is more important than luck. Poker lends itself well to the Net and this is one of the best sites around; even professional players – a notoriously cynical lot – are not only playing but committing big money to it. If you're new to poker there's a tutorial and pretend-money games so you can practice before you try to swim with the sharks. The only disadvantage is that you can't stare out your opponents as you stick in a big bluff.

ODDSCHECKER

www.oddschecker.com ★★★★

No online gambler should be without a bookmark to this site. When you're betting with a bookie you've got to get the best odds; there's little or no point in backing a winner at 6-1 when you could have got 8-1 elsewhere. Oddschecker simply tells you which bookie is offering the best odds for your selection, saving the need to trawl

@ If you have to bookmark one...

FLUTTER

www.flutter.com ★★★★★

Flutter wins this race by a short head, chiefly because it offers a kind of betting that can only be found on the Net. It's called person-to-person betting, or a betting exchange. You can choose whether you want to be a punter or a bookmaker. In bookie mode you choose a horse, team or individual that you think will lose and invite punters to bet with you by offering odds. Just like a bookie, you'll need to make a careful calculation here, offering odds good enough to attract business without bankrupting yourself if the horse you lay comes in. (This business about laying a horse: it doesn't refer to something you'd see in Dutch video but to the practice of laying odds.) Or you can play punter, and try to find fools offering over-generous odds.

Flutter: cut out the middleman – be a bookie yourself

There's a vast range of stuff to bet on, and if no-one's offering the bet you want you can put in a request and see if anyone bites. Flutter makes its money by charging a small commission on each bet. Founders Josh Hannah and Vince Monical tell a charming story about being inspired by a series of email bets they had; the fact that they were both already big cheeses in e-business probably didn't hinder them. This one could be big.

WORDS: BEN OLIVER; PICTURES: KOBAL; CORBIS

Sporting Life: now on the Web

through a dozen complex Web sites. They also dole out tips based on their observations of how the market is moving and advise you on the small print when you're choosing which bookie to sign up with. Best of all if you're a novice is the excellent betting tips and glossary section, handy if you can't tell a layer from a steamer.

THE SPORTING LIFE BETTING ZONE

www.sportinglife.com/zone ★★★★

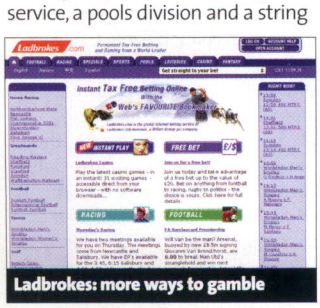
A few years ago no self-respecting punter would allow himself to be seen without a rolled-up copy of the *Sporting Life* under his arm. Maybe it's appropriate that as online gambling becomes a £1 billion industry in the UK, the *Life* has abandoned its print edition and gone Web-only. It's still the business: the Betting Zone covers every type of sport and every type of tickle, including spread betting. You won't pick up any exclusive tips but you'll learn how to value a horse or a football match and bet like a pro, or at least talk like one. In addition to the expert opinion there are invaluable tools like a betting calculator to work out the odds and winnings on complex bets, and a database of horses.

You invite punters to bet with you by laying odds

LADBROKES

www.ladbrokes.com ★★★★

Ladbrokes is a major player on the UK gambling scene with 2,000 betting shops, a phone betting service, a pools division and a string of casinos. The Web site brings all this together; no other site offers you as many ways to do your bundle, as proper punters say. You get fixed-odds sports betting on a huge range of events but there's also specials betting (on stuff like politics and TV shows), weekly bingo-style games, the Irish lottery and even a casino. If you want to display your expertise without risking any cash you can play the fantasy leagues; Ladbrokes will be hoping you'll be tempted to put your money where your mouth is. Despite all the content it's easy to find your away around, but like a Vegas casino you might never find your way out...


Ladbrokes: more ways to gamble

ASPINALLS

www.aspinalls.com ★★★

This is the online offshoot of the discreet Mayfair casino that has been pauperising the rich and famous for 40 years. Founded by the late John Aspinall, friend of Lord 'Lucky' Lucan, it's a publicly-quoted company so unlike some online casinos your money won't just disappear. It offers all the usual casino games and is slick, stylish and easy to use. Hard to see why you'd want to, though; the odds in casino games like blackjack and roulette are stacked against the punter. You've as much chance of losing your shirt playing in an online casino as a real one but without the compensation of the free drinks, cocktail waitresses and air of seduction and glamour you get with the real thing.

SMARTBET

www.smartbet.co.uk ★★★

If you're the sort of punter who could happily spend all day in one betting shop you'll like Smartbet. It's just over a month old and backed by the *Racing Post*, so you know it's kosher. It's also one of the most comprehensive sites around. As well as reading the *Post*'s expert opinions you can view live streaming prices from five major bookies (serious punters would want to see them all before committing) and place a bet with any of them without leaving the site. It also offers Flutter-style gambling. Sites which specialise in any of these areas will offer greater depth, but this is a good place to start.

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials

Powergen: a quality online service for those deluged by bills

BUDGETING

This Is Money
www.thisismoney.com
Hold on to your purse strings with several interactive facilities from the *Daily Mail*.

Guardian Unlimited – Money
money.guardian.co.uk
Right-on money guide with news and features.

PAYING BILLS ONLINE

Servista
www.servista.com
Pay one e-bill for all your utilities on this innovative site.

Powergen
www.powergen.co.uk
For convenience and savings in your utilities bills.

MONEY NEWS AND SHARE PRICES

FT.com
www.ft.com
The mother of all money sites, from the makers of the pink-paged financial bible.

Sharepages.com
www.sharepages.com
News from all the markets in a quick-glance, easy-to-navigate format.

Stocktrade
www.stocktrade.co.uk
Keep your finger on the pulse with this site, which offers real-time prices.

INVESTING

Citywire.co.uk
www.citywire.co.uk
Company news and advice. Packed with facts and figures.

The Motley Fool UK
www.fool.co.uk
One of *the net*'s favourite sites, offering helpful advice for the learner investor.

Ask Figaro
www.askfigaro.com
Compare financial products' results at a glance here.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

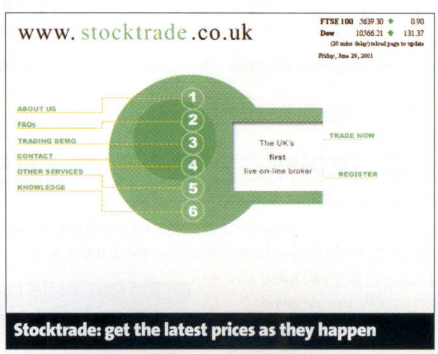
Investment Week
www.invweek.co.uk
Top monetary advice from the in-depth *Investment Week*.

hemscott.NET
www.hemscott.net
Get access to a veritable gold-mine of analysis from this easy-to-use, no-nonsense site.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Interactive Investor
www.iii.co.uk
Advice for individual investors.

Tax Assist Direct Ltd
www.taxassist.co.uk
Help with the taxman for small business and investors.



Stocktrade: get the latest prices as they happen

NEWSGROUP

alt.recovery.addiction.gambling
Get support from those who've let gambling rule their lives.

MAILING LIST

News, tips and tricks for online gamblers. Email **casinonews-subscribe@topica.com**

NEED MORE? This month's bargains Dealfinder p24
Useful money addresses The Directory p84

FOCUS:// Royal family

'You ain't seen me ...roight?'

Meet the family

As the Queen Mum celebrates yet another birthday, we celebrate her clan...

WORLD BOOK ELIZABETH II

www.worldbook.com/fun/queen/html/elizabethii.html ★★★★

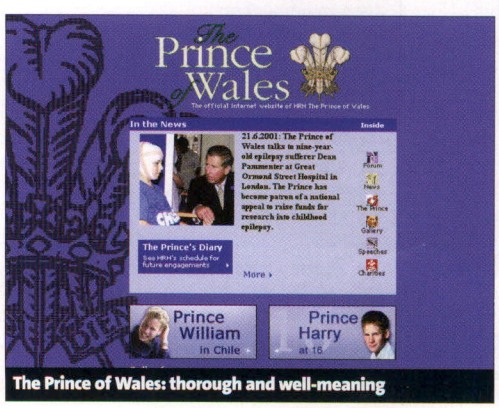
Written in the sort of reverential tone befitting a monarch, this fact-heavy site is a useful intro to the life and times of dear old Liz. The *Janet and John* style ('Elizabeth II is the queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland...') contains solid biographical details of the Queen's life – particularly on the events which led to her succeeding to the throne. Like the rest,though, this is on the brief side and, in keeping with the spirit of the monarchy, seems to prefer to gloss over the unseemly aspects (King Edward gave up the throne to 'marry a divorced American woman' – and no more is said about *that* little incident). Despite its dry tone the site provides an informative guide to Liz's life.

@ If you have to bookmark one...

THE PRINCE OF WALES

www.princeofwales.gov.uk ★★★★★

Never slow to pick up on new ways of thinking, Prince Charles has embraced the Internet revolution and launched his own Web site – with pretty impressive results. Packed with info about the life and times of our future king (if he ever gets there), the site is divided into sections – news, biography, forum, speeches – which in turn lead to yet more sub-sections; this is a thorough examination of his life. The biography deals matter-of-factly with his education and career in the armed forces it also touches briefly on his marriage. There's an in-depth examination of his role and what it means to be the Prince of Wales – the responsibilities and duties involved. If you want to find out what he gets up to on a day-to-day basis (in the public eye at least) visit the News and Events section: it's quite surprising how many functions he attends (the unglamourous ones that don't capture the headlines because he didn't kiss Camilla). For some strange reason there seems to be an inordinate amount of retirement home visits. The site also provides the opportunity to read his speeches ('The Plight of the Albatross – and Other Species' was a particularly riveting one) and you can join in the forum and write in with your views on any of the topics the Prince espouses. Built in the Prince's image, this is a thorough and well-meaning site.



The Prince of Wales: thorough and well-meaning

THE QUEEN MOTHER: 100 YEARS OF HISTORY

www.compuserve.co.uk/channels/news/itn_special/queenmother ★★★★

Given that the Queen Mum saw through the entire 20th Century, it seems only fitting that this tribute uses that fact as its central point. This concise but informative Web site explains all the royal events in detail – with the abdication, and the circumstances surrounding it, particularly well documented. The site excels at giving history a bit of colour, by trying to impart a sense of what the events meant to those involved: the king, for example, found the stress of World War Two and his duty to the country almost too much to take. This site paints a picture of a steely-willed woman who did much to shape the monarchy. Let's hope her Duracell batteries keep going well into her hundreds.

DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES

www.diana.org.uk ★★★★

In death, as in life, the fascination with Diana never ends. The woman who dragged the Royal Family into the 20th Century before threatening its collapse is the subject of a multitude of Web sites – the majority concerned with conspiracy theories about her death. This elegant site, however, takes a (much) calmer view of the Queen of Hearts with thorough details of her background, information on her charity work and news of the Diana memorial fund. You can also contribute to the condolence book, which is passed on to William and Harry (bet they read it avidly). Neither critical nor gushing, the site provides a complete look at the life of probably the most famous woman in the world.

HRH THE DUKE OF YORK

www.royal.gov.uk/family/york.htm ★★★

The mad-keen golfer who somehow manages to find the time to carry out a few royal engagements to earn his keep is profiled in depth at this factual site. Divided into sections – interests, family, work (only a few lines here for some reason) – the details tend to read somewhat like a CV, nicely laid out and factually correct while not being the most riveting read. But despite this, the site creates a positive impression of the man nicknamed Randy Andy by a pre-Diana press desperate for glamorous royalty. His time in the armed services and his active duty in the Falklands are well documented, as are his family details. Useful for straightforward information, but nothing that a few salacious snippets couldn't have jazzed up...

WORDS: CLAIRE McHATTIE; PICTURE: PA

WILLIAM-ONLINE

www.william-online.co.uk ★★★★

The future king (although judging by the family's longevity it won't be for a while yet) enjoys the same camera-friendly looks as his mother and, accordingly, is the subject of adoring, if slightly hysterical, Web pages. This one, although very much in the pro-William mould, has had the presence of mind to collect itself before frightening the reading public with teen hysteria outbursts. The site is pretty much a clearing house for any article written about the young man, with 175 stories about him – from 1995 to the present day – in the news section alone. The forum, meanwhile, provides space to ask and answer such burning questions as 'Was he spanked when younger by his mother and nannies?'. And which music-lover could resist the Prince William Winamp skins?

In death, as in life, the fascination with Diana never ends

PRINCESS MARGARET

www.hello-magazine.co.uk/profiles/princessmargaret ★★★

It's apt that fun-loving Princess Margaret, the Famous Grouse fan and 60-a-day smoker dubbed 'the Diana of her day' should be the only royal to have a *Hello!* profile. And it doesn't disappoint: beginning 'blessed with both rank and wealth', it continues in the same rich vein. Although it's concise, with just a photo gallery to complement the life summary, it discusses the parallels between Margaret and Diana – while her sister devoted herself to the throne, Margaret devoted herself to partying. *Hello!* does so well in detailing her life of privilege followed by tragedy you almost feel sorry for her.

THRONE OUT

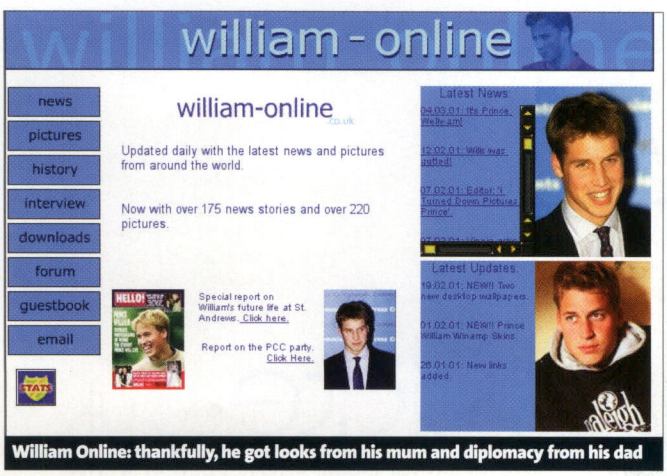
www.throneout.freeserve.co.uk ★★★★

Surprisingly for such a contentious issue, the Web isn't filled to overflowing with sites spitting anti-royal venom. Then we found it all at Throne Out and discovered that, in fact, all the rage against all royal families is contained here in one, seething package. Which is not to say it consists of the ramblings of a madman. The site is well put together with a clear, easy layout (albeit written in bright, blood red) while the content, although *very* anti-royal, argues its case well. Subjects up for discussion range from digs at royal TV shows (such as *It's a Knockout*) to royal affairs (it invites you to see evidence that Princes Edward and Andrew don't resemble their father). Plus you can sign up and put your point of view on the family forward. All good (if not clean) fun.

PRINCE PHILIP

www.princephilip.co.uk ★★★★

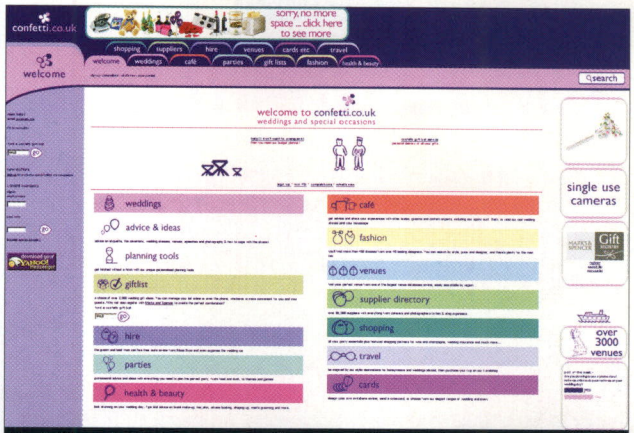
The man who seems to find it impossible to not put his foot in it is profiled at this concise and entertaining site, with the emphasis most definitely on the legion of gaffes committed by the Queen's husband. Many of them are faithfully reproduced here, with classics such as 'If you stay here much longer you'll get slitty-eyed' – uttered to a British student during a visit to China. Elsewhere, discover little-known facts about the Duke in the Did You Know? section, and ponder on paradoxes such as Prince Philip, a great supporter of blood sports, being made president of the Worldwide Fund for Nature...



William Online: thankfully, he got looks from his mum and diplomacy from his dad

@ CLASSIC SITES TO BOOKMARK

Web essentials



Confetti.co.uk: the honeymoon will soon end if you don't wise up via the Web

GOVERNMENT

10 Downing Street
www.number-10.gov.uk
Features the latest news and facts, and an opportunity to join a discussion forum.

Scottish Parliament
www.scottish.parliament.uk
Up-to-the-minute news bulletins and a chance to share your views.

National Assembly for Wales
www.wales.gov.uk
Features news, press releases, the latest policies, and links to other Welsh offices.

Department of Health Website
www.doh.gov.uk
Read up on the Department's policies and health reports.

Long Term Care for the Elderly
www.open.gov.uk/royal-commission-elderly/index.htm
Proof that your Government cares.

Confetti.co.uk
www.confetti.co.uk
A big site for a big day.

Wedding Guide UK
www.weddingguideuk.com
Huge but easily navigable site including everything the groom and best man will want to know.

Weddings.co.uk
www.weddings.co.uk
Couples wishing to marry abroad can find the legal requirements for over 20 countries here.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

London Fire Brigade
www.london-fire.gov.uk
With safety tips and photos to ensure London's not burning.

Police
www.policecouldyou.co.uk
Recruitment site for the boys and girls in blue, with local links.

RELIGION

Beliefnet
www.beliefnet.com
Portal encompassing all beliefs and religions.

Buddhanet
www.buddhanet.net
Superb resource for all things Buddhist.

Jewish.co.uk
www.jewish.co.uk
News and views for UK-based Jews, including a popular 'Ask The Rabbi' feature.

Muslim Directory
www.muslimdirectory.co.uk
Muslim businesses and groups.

Could you join the police? Find out here...

NEWSGROUP

alt.gossip.royalty
Have your say on recent – and not so recent – royal issues and events.

WEDDINGS

Web Wedding
www.webwedding.co.uk
Features an easy-to-use interactive planner.

MAILING LIST

Subcribe via ***www.topica.com*** for a regular newsletter for dedicated royal-watchers.

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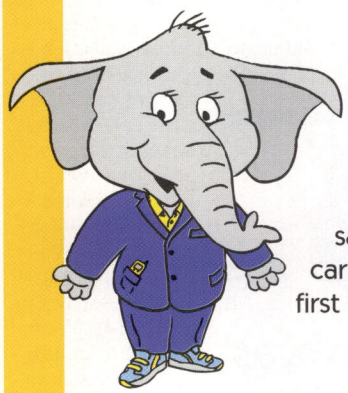

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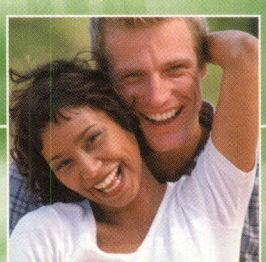
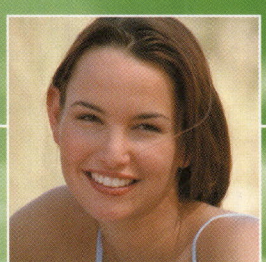
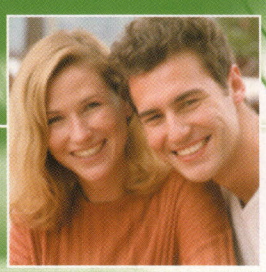


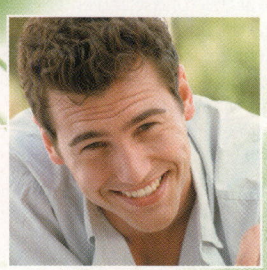
"Your matching was right on! We were the number one match for each other on udate and it seems in real life too."



"I'm happy to tell you I have met the man of my dreams."



"Thank you udate for helping to make this happen... I have met my soulmate after searching for years."



"I have been with udate for less than a month and already have too many women to write to and meet."

(they just clicked)

It's easy to make friends or build relationships with udate. Our sophisticated matching system and extensive membership database provides more choice, more places, more fun. And because you have total 'on-line' control, you can build the relationship you want at your own pace. To find out more go to www.udate.co.uk and click now.

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The UK's largest global internet dating service

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SEPTEMBER 2001 NEWS 79 | SHOPPING 81 | WHAT'S ON FREESERVE 82 | A-Z CHANNEL GUIDE 82

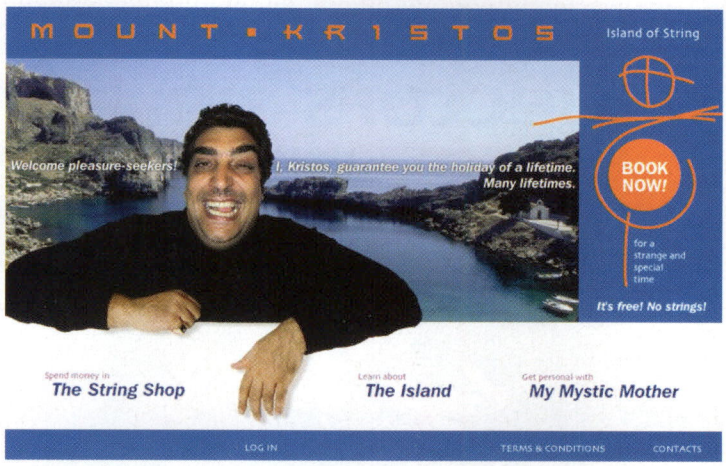
Communication www.freeserve.com/entertainment

Latest hotspot is online

Discover an unusual new holiday destination full of fun, games – and intrigue

A virtual holiday on a Greek island is the latest interactive drama from Freeserve and the digital entertainment company XPT. The same partnership produced the BAFTA Award-winning drama Online Caroline, also hosted by Freeserve.

The new drama (hosted at *www.freeserve.com/entertainment*) offers Web users the chance to join a local guide, Kristos, on an unforgettable day-by-day tour of the various bays of the island of Mount Kristos – provided they agree to view the time-share apartments at their final destination, Whittle Bay. It seems a small price to pay for a summer holiday you can go on without having to take time off work or find someone to feed the cats – until you begin to realise that there's more to the island than meets the eye …

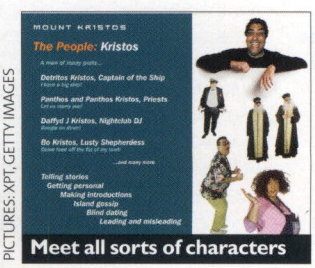


Kristos: your personal guide

Mount Kristos uses a range of Web technology, from funny animation to personal SMS messages, to create a fully interactive experience between holiday-makers and the extraordinary fictional characters they meet. But throughout your holiday, you'll also be introduced to many other real visitors – like you – who you can message, enabling you to make real friends online while using an anonymous identity.

As you visit the different bays of the island, you can choose to sunbathe, ski, ramble and enjoy the local culture. You'll also be able to eat meals and play games, the outcome of which, along with decisions you make on the island, will help you earn lengths of string, the island's currency. You'll be encouraged to earn as much string as you can, though it's down to you to work out why it's so crucial. Could it have something to do with the fact that no one ever seems to return from Whittle Bay?

A holiday at Mount Kristos gives you the opportunity to behave as you would never dare to in real life, making it the ultimate escape! And if you can't explain the island's mysterious undercurrent on your first visit, keep returning until you do! Pack your bags and go to *www.freeserve.com/entertainment*.



Meet all sorts of characters

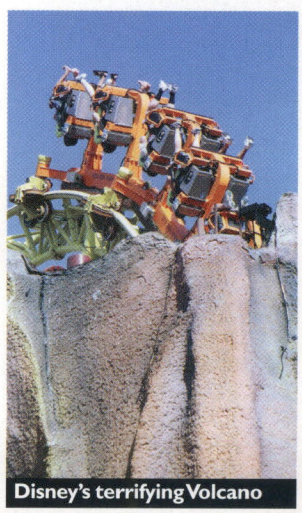
PICTURES: XPT, GETTY IMAGES

Money www.freeserve.com/travel

Florida: thrills without spills

It's been described as 'more fun than anything else you could imagine doing with your clothes on' and attracts over 1.2 million UK visitors every year. The Orlando experience in Florida is British tourists' favourite US holiday, thanks to the breathtaking thrill-rides and special effects found at Walt Disney World, SeaWorld and Universal Studios. Walt Disney World is divided into three enormous theme-parks: The Magic Kingdom, Disney-MGM Studios and EPCOT, which takes scientific discoveries as its inspiration.

continued over >>


Disney's terrifying Volcano

Travel www.freeserve.com/travel

Florida: thrills without spills

>> (continued from page 79)

There's also the Animal Kingdom, where real animals roam around a 500-acre site styled as African and Asian landscapes – not everyone's cup of tea, but quite a spectacle none the less. The $60 million Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man at Universal Studios' new Island of Adventure is the most technologically advanced ride on the planet. Merging real action and 3-D graphics, it has to be seen to be believed!

With so much entertainment at Orlando, it's no surprise it's so popular, so Freeserve Travel

Travel: your guide to Orlando

(*www.freeserve.com/travel*) have put together an essential guide to making the most of a holiday there. For example, you'll find advice on what time of year to go: avoid the hurricane season, but resist the temptation of summer, too, when the high temperatures and humidity can be very uncomfortable. And while there's a lot to do at Orlando, it's a good idea to spend the second week of your holiday recuperating on the coast.

Sea World's latest attraction is Discovery Cove, an exclusive park where visitors can swim with dolphins. Tickets here might cost £130, but the other parks aren't nearly as expensive. To give you maximum flexibility you can buy day passes to all the parks, and the new Fastpass, which enables you to avoid the queues by having an allotted time for individual rides, so you just turn up on time and away you go! The system works so well, you wonder why no one thought of it before.

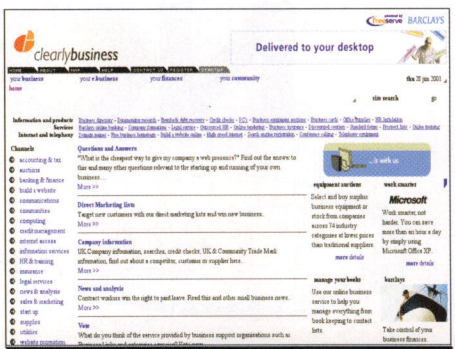
For more information on Orlando, plus great-value holiday deals there and to many other destinations, go to *www.freeserve.com/travel*.

PICTURE: PA

Business www.clearlybusiness.com

Get your site out there

Simply having a Web site isn't enough to make a difference to your business; you also need a way to enable your customers to find your site among the billion others now also on the World Wide Web. The way to do this is by making your site available to a search engine, by far the most popular means of finding a new site. At Clearlybusiness (*www.clearlybusiness.com*) you can find out how to do this as effectively as possible.



Find out how to get the most from your site

Search engines work by matching the keyword or subject entered by the person doing the search with information held on one of a handful of databases which serve the world's search engines. The most popular search method is by keyword, so to make sure a search engine finds and lists your site before your rival's, you'll want to make it as easy as possible for the match to be made. That starts with supplying the database with the most likely keyword your customer will enter, so choose everyday, simple language that people will use if they're a hurry. You might also want to check the keywords supplied by a competitor by viewing the source code of their site in your browser; you might be able to think of something better.

When you register your site with a database, you will also need to supply a page title and description that will be displayed when a search engine lists you. Make sure this is as relevant and appealing to customers as possible; it could make the difference between whether they click on your Web address or pass it by.

Submitting your site's details can be a lengthy and laborious process, but Clearlybusiness will give you advice on doing it yourself or using a search engine registration company to do it for you for a small fee. You can also learn how to monitor your site's activity on a search engine, plus much more on promoting your Web site, at *www.clearlybusiness.com*.

Collectables www.freeserve.com/lifestyle/collectables

Collectors' corner

Anyone with an interest in collectables will be pleased to find a new area especially for them on the Freeserve Lifestyle channel (*www.freeserve.com/lifestyle*). From antiquities to rock and pop memorabilia, cameras to kitchenware, every kind of collectable is covered. The site is full of information and advice for the new collector, starting in Where to Begin. Here, collectables expert Eric Knowles offers guides to buying at auction, finding a bargain at a car boot sale, and the best way to go about displaying your items once you've brought them home. And if you're looking for a rare model steam engine to complete your collection or want to know where to look for a particular piece of porcelain,

Find out how to spot the treasures from the tat at car boot sales

look in the Club sections for the relevant collectors' group to contact. By joining them you'll be able to share your interest and get advice on growing your collection.

Other useful resources include details for many of the country's specialist museums, and a collector's bookstore. And then there's the Miller's Price Guide, where you can get a good idea of what you can expect to pay for a particular type of item. You can even become a bit of an expert by familiarising yourself with the list of collectors' terms in the Miller's glossary, and serious collectors will find useful links to major UK auction houses, such as Phillips, Sothebys and Miller's. Of course, another excellent way to bid for collectables is on the Freeserve auctions channel, FSauctions (*www.fsauctions.co.uk*), where you can find all the bargains of a regular auction house in a fraction of the time it takes to travel there and make your bid. Find out more at *www.freeserve.com/lifestyle/collectables*.

Careers
www.freeserve.com/careers

Online guidance at every step

Sound careers advice is at hand

Now that the holidays are nearly over, it's time to start thinking about making a fresh start this autumn, whether you're returning to college, making your first steps on the career ladder or watching your children go through school.

At Freeserve Learning, parents can choose the best school for their child by searching the database for essential facts on over 22,000 UK primary and secondary-level state and independent schools. Much older pupils will find help, too: the new Higher Education section of Freeserve Learning provides college and university students with access to some 17,000 links to online resources.

Graduates now have a special area on Freeserve Careers, where they can find plenty of advice on finding the right job, plus online access to hundreds of vacancies. And if you're looking to move to your next job, there's no need to scour the broadsheets: get the latest relevant vacancies delivered straight into your inbox from Freeserve Careers. On icircle Careers you'll find plenty of tips on creating a winning CV and advice on job interviews. And if you want a complete career change, you can find out how to start making it happen.

Whatever stage you're at on the learning or career ladder, find out how to take control of your life by going to *www.freeserve.com/learning*, *www.freeserve.com/careers* and *www.icircle.com/careers*.

Shopping
www.freeserve.com/shopping

SHOPPING

Back to school... and to football!

Get kitted out for two rather different major autumn events: the new academic year, and the new football season

If you're getting ready to go back to school or college this September, you'll want to arm yourself with all the books you can get your hands on to stay on course and pass your exams with flying colours. You'll probably need many different textbooks, but you don't have to lug them back from the high-street to add them to your collection. Instead, save yourself the time and effort and buy them online from the Books and Arts section of Freeserve Shopping (*www.freeserve.com/shopping/books*), where you'll find key texts for almost every subject imaginable – from biology to business, maths to media, engineering to economics. For English literature you'll find new novels as well as all the classics, while the Language section includes a range of informative books on different aspects of language and linguistics. Text books aren't cheap, so if you're on a student budget you'll be especially pleased to learn that almost all the books on Freeserve Shopping are available at discount prices, helping you to make the most of the money you've got.

LOOK GOOD, FEEL GOOD

Get yourself in the right frame of mind for some serious hard work this term by feeling your best in some great new clothes. You'll find bargains galore in the Fashion department of Freeserve Shopping (*www.freeserve.com/shopping/fashion*), so there's no need to worry about spending too much of the money you've been saving over the holidays.

Parents, too, will want to visit the Fashion department for brand new school uniforms, and also for sports kit. Get really organised by ordering your child's school and sports outfits before they're available in the shops. And in Sport and Leisure (*www.freeserve.com/shopping/leisure*) you'll be able to buy them all the equipment they'll need, such hockey sticks, swimming goggles and footballs.

FOOTBALL RETURNS

Footballs will be in the forefront of your mind, whatever age you are, as the football season kicks off again with the premiership starting on August 18th. One of the latest partners to join Freeserve Shopping is the sport giant Umbro, and with them they bring plenty of great offers on sports clothing and equipment. These include the latest strip for the premiership teams, and the new England shirt, so you can support our lads in style as they play Germany on September 1st, Albania on the 6th and Greece in October. There are new exclusive offers every week at Freeserve Shopping, and you can make sure you know about them by receiving Shopping news straight into your inbox. And of course, the beauty of bargains at Shopping is that they're all available in one place, so there's no need to spend time going from site to site; it's all under one roof at Freeserve. To get on the Shopping mailing list, go straight to *www.freeserve.com/shopping*.

op fashion and sportwear

Support our lads in style: buy the latest strip online

PICTURE: P.A.

What you'll get from Freeserve

FREE INTERNET CALLS

Everyone uses the Internet in different ways. Some use it for work; others browse in the evenings at home; still more just check their email a couple of times a day. So Freeserve has a choice of great-value packages to suit every kind of user. For detailed information about AnyTime, HomeTime, No Ties and our high-speed service Freeserve Plus, visit *www.freeserve.com/time*.

EMAIL

Email allows you to send messages all over the world, at any time of the day or night, and receive a reply within seconds. With Freeserve, email is completely free; all you pay for is the cost of the connection to the Internet.

MOBILE INTERNET

Because email is sent to and from computers, there's always the worry that you're missing vital messages whenever you're away from your PC.

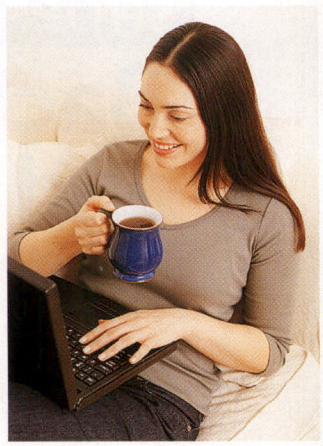
But with a mobile Internet (or WAP) phone, you can access your emails whenever you're away from your PC. To find out how, visit *www.freeserve. com/mobile*.

TALKING EMAIL

If you don't have a mobile Internet phone, you can still access your emails when you're away from your computer – by using Speechmail, a clever service which reads your email messages to you. Find more information at *www.freeserve.com/communications*.

YOUR OWN WEB SPACE

Once you've started looking around the Internet, chances are you'll be keen to build your own site. That's easy when you become a Freeserve member. We'll give you a massive 15 megabytes of free space in which to create your own site. The software on the free installation CD, which you can use to sign up as a member, makes it easy to get your site up and running. With Freeserve, you'll soon be at home on the Internet.



THE BEST CONTENT

As well as offering so many great services to Internet and mobile phone users, Freeserve is dedicated to bringing you the very best content on the Internet and collecting it all on the Freeserve Today page at *www.freeserve.com*. Make Today your homepage to get an instant digest of all the latest news, weather and sport whenever you log on to the Internet.

FREESERVE FOR EVERY PART OF YOUR LIFE

Freeserve has 18 excellent channels, one for every part of your life, from Lifestyle to Careers, Sport to Business, Health to Money; Shopping has everything you could possibly want, and there's a whole channel for Women. And our email newsletter will keep you up to date with everything that's going on at Freeserve. *www.freeserve.com*

Sign up online at www.freeserve.com or use the free Freeserve installation CD available from Dixons, Currys, PC World and The Link – or call 0800 970 8890 to have it delivered to you direct.

A-Z CHANNEL GUIDE

WITH 18 CHANNELS TO CHOOSE FROM, THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Auctions The thrill of bidding for a bargain isn't restricted to the auction room. You can bid online for almost any item imaginable at FSAuctions.	**Business** Clearly business can offer your business support and advice, and get you online, whether you're well established or you've just started out.	**Careers** You're wired, now get hired, not fired! Careers lets you search databases of 70,000 jobs nationwide and apply online with your CV.	**Chat** The new, improved chat service is a great hit. Here you can make new friends, set up your own chat groups; you can even talk to the stars!	**Entertainment** At Entertainment you'll find all the latest film, music, radio and television news. You can buy CDs, books, DVDs and concert tickets here, too.	**Games** If you're a computer games fanatic, this is the place to come to read reviews of the latest games, then visit the virtual shop to buy them.
Health Freeserve Health is full of information, advice and medical news to help you and your family stay in tip-top condition.	**Learning** From primary through to A-level and beyond, our interactive environment makes learning easier for all ages.	**Lifestyle** The Lifestyle channel is an exclusive magazine covering every aspect of your social and personal life, and much more.	**Money** Keep your finances in order with expert advice from Money, where you'll find tips on everything from ISAs to mortgages.	**Motoring** Get on the road with the Freeserve Motoring channel, your one-stop shop for all your motoring needs.	**News and Weather** Get tomorrow's papers today with this superb service delivering the latest news and weather.
Property From finding the right mortgage to sorting the decorators from the cowboys, on Property you'll find everything for your home.	**Search** Use Search to find anything on the Internet, including businesses and services, domain names and items	**Shopping** At Shopping you can find a huge range of items, from flowers or food to a CD or a computer. Look out for exclusive bargains, too.	**Sport** Football, rugby, tennis, cricket, motorsport, golf – the list goes on. Whatever your sport, you'll find the latest news and results here.	**Travel** Visit the Travel channel for instant access to a database of 70,000 flights and holidays worldwide as well as sensational last-minute deals.	**Women** For features, information and advice, Web women need look no further than the Freeserve women's channel, icircle.com.

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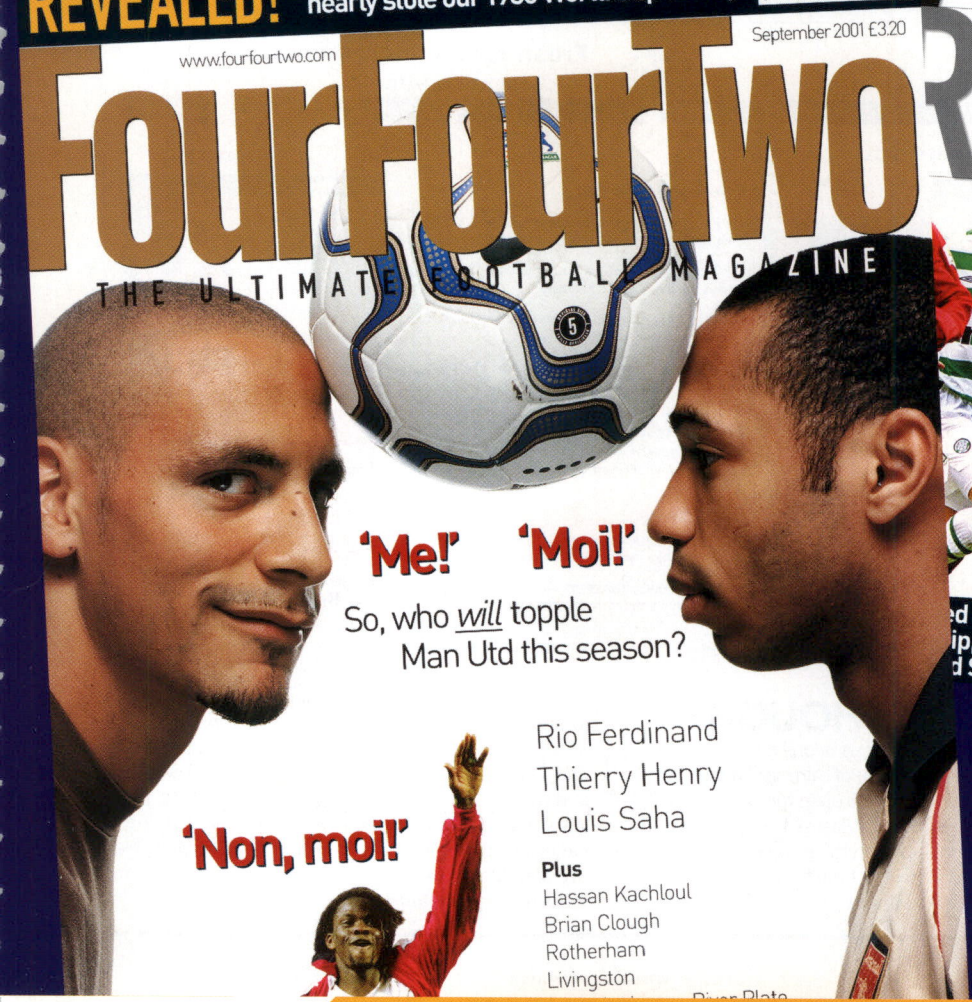

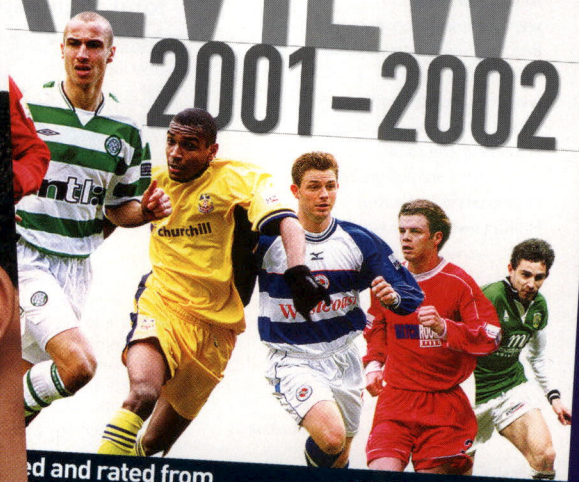

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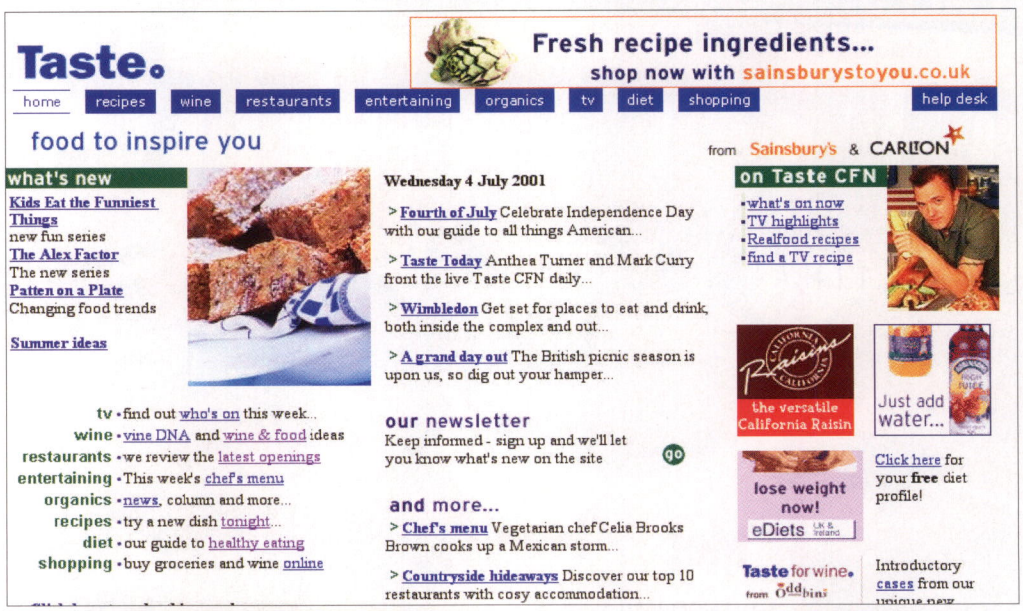
European Commission ***europa.eu.int***
France ***www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr***
Germany ***www.bundesregierung.de***
Russia ***www.gov.ru***
United Nations ***www.un.org***
United States ***www.whitehouse.gov***

<HEALTH>
Doctors & diagnosis
Askamedic ***www.askamedic.com***
Ask Dr Weil ***cgi.pathfinder.com/drweil***
Ask The Doc ***www.ask-the-doc.com***
Babycentre ***www.babycentre.co.uk***
BackCare ***www.backpain.org***
British Dental Association ***www.bda-dentistry.org.uk***
British Medical Journal ***www.bmj.com***
The Brompton Dental Clinic ***www.mercuryfree.co.uk***
Healthy Ideas ***www.healthyideas.com***
MedRef ***www.medscout.com***
Mental Health ***www.mentalhealth.com***
NetDoctor ***www.netdoctor.co.uk***
Patient ***www.patient.co.uk***
Pharma-Lexicon.com ***www.pharma-lexicon.com***
Pocket Doctor ***www.pocketdoctor.co.uk***

Support & information
Alcoholics Anonymous ***www.alcoholics-anonymous.org***
Alzheimer's Disease Society ***www.alzheimers.org.uk***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FOOD AND DRINK NEW ENTRY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

You've spontaneously invited someone round for dinner; you'll cook, you say, with an air of calm confidence. But you're not so cavalier when you open the cupboard and find it bare. Save your bacon at Taste.co.uk, the food and drink site with just about everything you could wish for – even the ingredients, if you've time to wait for delivery. Input three key items lurking at the back of the fridge and the recipe finder will come up with a choice of mouth-watering dishes you can turn them into. For the easy option, search the restaurant database by cuisine or location to find an impressive eaterie instead. The site also has ideas for entertaining, tips on going organic, and an enormous wine section with guides to knowing and choosing the right bottle. After all that, you might want to visit the Diet section, where a personal healthy eating plan from new American partners eDiet will help over-indulgent foodies get back in shape. An essential for all food fans. ***www.taste.co.uk***

WORDS: ALEX NEWBY

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www.cancerbacup.org.uk
Diabetes UK ***www.diabetic.org.uk***
Drugscope ***www.drugscope.org.uk***
Fitness Online ***www.fitnessonline.com***
HIV/AIDS ***www.brad.ac.uk/staff/ijhodgson/hivlinks.htm***
National Meningitis Trust
www.meningitis-trust.org.uk
Natural Naturally
www.naturalnaturally.com
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www.recovery.org.uk
ThinkNatural.com
www.thinknatural.com

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www.howtocleananything.com
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Reed ***www.reed.co.uk***

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FunSchool ***www.funschool.com***
Kidscom ***www.kidscom.com/orakc/Mousers/mouse.html***
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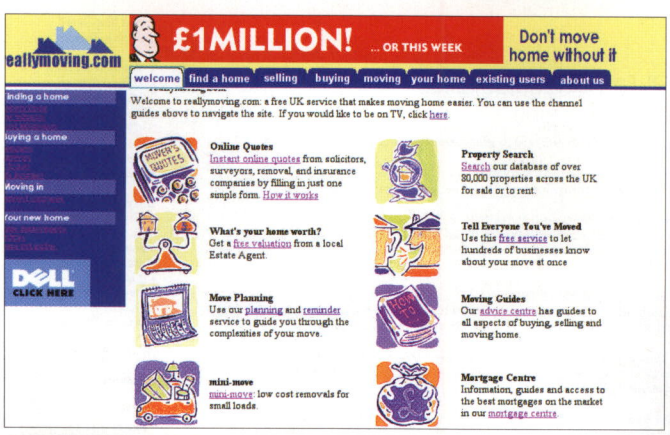
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HOMES NEW ENTRY

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In some parts of Britain, house prices have risen over nine percent in the last year, so it's not surprising that more and more home-buyers are moving out of cities. But it's also the attraction of a country idyll that lures them, and if you're really serious about a change of life, search the property database at Reallymoving, which includes farms as well as houses and flats all over the UK. The site also helps you with every other aspect of buying, selling and moving, with instant online quotes for everything from survey fees to carpet cleaners, a host of reputable partner sites and email reminders of your tasks right up to the big day.
www.reallymoving.com

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Vitaminic ***www.vitaminic.co.uk***

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Mouse Jam ***www.mousejam.com***
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Scratch It ***www.turntable.de***
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Newspapers
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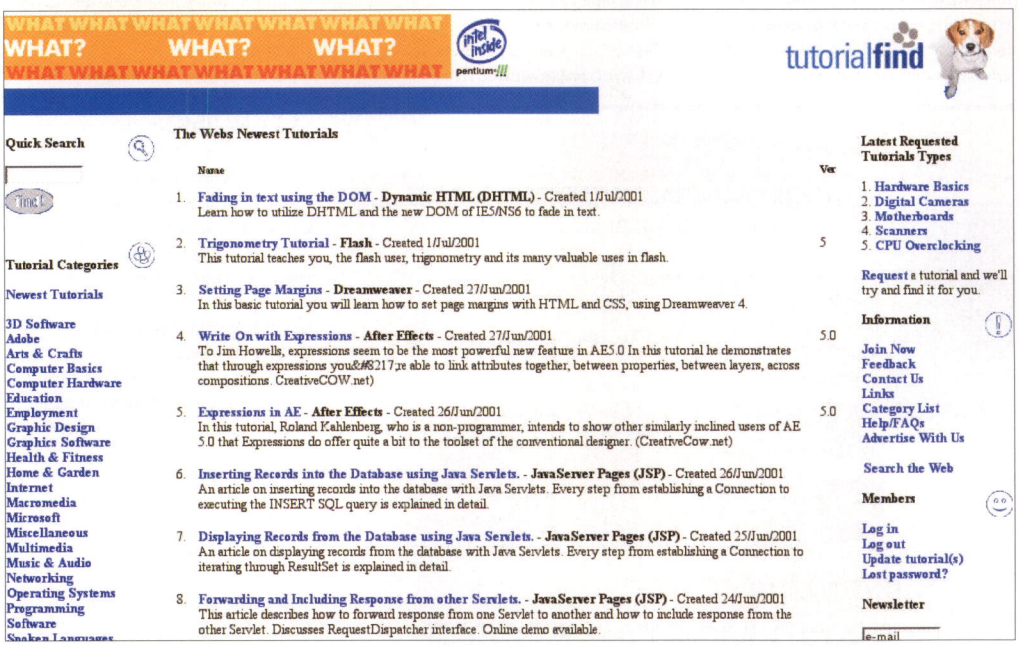
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1. Fading in text using the DOM - Dynamic HTML (DHTML) - Created 1/Jul/2001
Learn how to utilize DHTML and the new DOM of IE5/NS6 to fade in text.
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5
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4. Write On with Expressions - After Effects - Created 27/Jun/2001
To Jim Howells, expressions seem to be the most powerful new feature in AE5.0 In this tutorial he demonstrates that through expressions you’re able to link attributes together, between properties, between layers, across compositions. CreativeCOW.net)
5.0
5. Expressions in AE - After Effects - Created 26/Jun/2001
In this tutorial, Roland Kahlenberg, who is a non-programmer, intends to show other similarly inclined users of AE 5.0 that Expressions do offer quite a bit to the toolset of the conventional designer. (CreativeCow.net)
5.0
6. Inserting Records into the Database using Java Servlets. - JavaServer Pages (JSP) - Created 26/Jun/2001
An article on inserting records into the database with Java Servlets. Every step from establishing a Connection to executing the INSERT SQL query is explained in detail.
7. Displaying Records from the Database using Java Servlets. - JavaServer Pages (JSP) - Created 25/Jun/2001
An article on displaying records from the database with Java Servlets. Every step from establishing a Connection to iterating through ResultSet is explained in detail.
8. Forwarding and Including Response from other Servlets. - JavaServer Pages (JSP) - Created 24/Jun/2001
This article describes how to forward response from one Servlet to another and how to include response from the other Servlet. Discusses RequestDispatcher interface. Online demo available.
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LEARNING NEW ENTRY

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

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eDirectory ***www.edirectory.co.uk***
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ShopSmart ***www.shopsmart.com***
Shops On The Net ***www.sotn.com***
Shop Spy ***www.shopspy.co.uk***
Shop Tour UK ***www.shoptour.co.uk***
Splendour.com ***www.splendour.com***
TopUKWebsites ***www.topukwebsites.com***
Shopping Zone ***ukshoppingzone.co.uk***
Virgin Net ***www.virgin.net/shopping***
Virtual Mall ***www.thevirtualmall.co.uk***
ValueMad ***www.valuemad.com***
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Your Wish List ***www.yourwishlist.com***

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Fashion Mall ***www.fashionmall.com***
FashionNet ***www.fashion.net***
Lifebyte ***www.lifebyte.com***
Models.com ***www.models.com***
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TheRumour ***www.therumour.com***
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<SPORT>

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SPORT NEW ENTRY

ONLINE COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Fulham join the Premiership for the first time this season, and as any top-flight team should, they've got their own site, chock full of news and info and a neat little football icon that rolls down the menu. All the requisite bases are covered: player profiles, club news, fixtures, match reports and statistics, plus a jobs page for fans who want to make Fulham their life. What makes this site, though, is the innovation, with live audio commentaries of every match linked to a chat room – perfect if you can't make it to Craven Cottage yourself. And next time someone wants to argue, point them towards the Rules of the Game section. ***www.fulhamfc.com***

Sport A-Z

Athletics ***www.nuff-respect.co.uk***
Autosport ***www.autosport.com***
Cricket ***www.cricket4.com***
Cycling ***www.cycleweb.co.uk***
Extreme sports ***www.soulgear.com***
Fishing ***www.anglersnet.co.uk***
Football ***www.football365.com***
Formula One ***www.itv-f1.com***
Golf ***www.golfonline.com***
Greyhound Racing ***www.wimbledonstadium.co.uk***
Hockey ***www.fieldhockey.com***
Martial Arts ***www.martial-arts-network.com***
Motorsport ***www.autosport.com***
Motorbike Racing ***www.motograndprix.com***
Racing ***www.racingpost.co.uk***
Rugby League ***www.rleague.com***
Rugby Union ***www.scrum.com***
Snooker ***www.snookernet.com***
Tennis ***www.tennis.com***
Wrestling ***www.wwf.com***

<TELEVISION>

TV companies

BBC ***www.bbc.co.uk***
Channel Four ***www.channel4.co.uk***
Channel Five ***www.channel5.co.uk***
E4 ***www.e4.com***
ITV ***www.itv.co.uk***
ONdigital ***www.ondigital.co.uk***
Sky ***www.sky.co.uk***

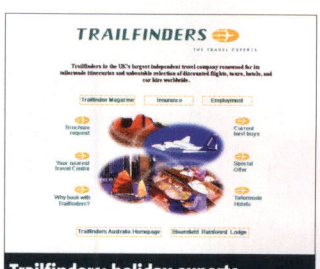
<TRAVEL>

Airlines

Air Canada ***www.aircanada.ca***
Air France ***www.airfrance.com***
American Airlines ***www.aa.com***
Britannia ***www.britanniaairways.com***
BA ***www.british-airways.com***
BM ***www.iflybritishmidland.com***
Buzz ***www.buzzaway.com***
Continental ***www.flycontinental.com***
easyJet ***www.easyjet.com***
Go ***www.go-fly.com***
Iberia ***www.iberia.com***
KLM ***www.klmuk.com***
Lufthansa ***www.lufthansa.com***
Qantas ***www.qantas.com.au***
Ryanair.com ***www.ryanair.com***
United Airlines ***www.ual.com***
Virgin Atlantic Airways ***www.virgin-atlantic.co.uk***

Ferries

Ferry Savers ***www.ferrysavers.co.uk***
P&O ***www.p-and-o.com***
Travel Britain ***www.travelbritain.com/UKPassengerFerries.html***
Travel.World ***www.travel.world.***



Trailfinders: holiday experts

co.uk/ferries.htm
UK Camp Site ***ukcampsite.co.uk***

Rail travel

Euro Railways ***www.eurorailways.com***
Great Eastern Railway ***www.ger.co.uk***
Great Western Trains ***www.great-western-trains.co.uk***
Railtrack ***www.railtrack.co.uk***
Scotrail ***www.scotrail.co.uk***
UK Public Transport ***www.pti.org.uk***
Virgin Trains ***www.virgintrains.co.uk***

Destination guides

Amsterdam ***www.channels.nl***
Australia ***australia-online.com***
Bargainholidays ***www.bargainholidays.com***
Bugbog ***www.bugbog.co.uk***
Caribbean ***www.caribbean-travel.com***
Caribbean Islands ***www.gopelican.com***
France ***www.franceway.com***
Germany ***www.germany-tourism.de***
Greece ***www.gogreece.com***
Greece ***www.sunisle.co.uk***
India ***www.indiagov.org***
Italy ***www.travel.it***
Ireland ***www.12travel.co.uk***
Ireland ***www.wannabeinireland.com***
Japan ***www.jnto.go.jp***
Scotland ***www.visitscotland.com***
Spain ***www.red2000.com***
UK ***www.exploreukland.co.uk***
US ***www.go-unitedstates.com***

Travel agents

Airtickets ***www.airtickets.co.uk***
Biztravel ***www.biztravel.com***
ebookers ***www.ebookers.com***
Expedia ***www.expedia.co.uk***
First Resort ***www.thefirstresort.com***
Holiday Deals ***www.holidaydeals.com***
Holiday Wizard ***www.holidaywizard.co.uk***
Iglu.com ***www.iglu.com***
Internet Travel ***www.itsnet.co.uk***
Last Minute ***www.lastminute.com***
STA Travel ***www.statravel.co.uk***
ThomasCook.com ***www.thomascook.co.uk***
Thomson ***www.thomson-holidays.com***
Trailfinders ***www.trailfinder.com***
Travel Choice ***www.travelchoice.co.uk***
Usit Campus ***www.usitcampus.co.uk***

<WEBCAMS>

Directories

Allcam ***www.allcam.com***
Camcity ***www.surveyor.com/camcity***
Digital Camera ***www.dcn.com***
FlyOnTheWall.com ***www.flyonthewall.com***
Webcam Central ***www.camcentral.com***
WebCam World ***www.webcamworld.com***
Webviews ***www.camvista.co.uk***

<WEB CENSORS>

Cybersnoop ***www.pearlsw.com***
Cyber Patrol ***www.cyberpatrol.com***
Net Nanny ***www.netnanny.com***
Xcheck ***www.xcheck.net***

<WEB DIRECTORIES>

About.com ***www.about.com***
4anything ***www.4anything.com***
AOL Netfind ***www.aol.com/netfind***
Excite ***www.excite.com***
Infoseek ***infoseek.go.com***
Liszt (mailing lists) ***www.liszt.com***
LookSmart ***www.looksmart.com***
Open Directory ***www.dmoz.org***
Thomson ***www.thomweb.co.uk***
WebCrawler ***www.webcrawler.com***
Yahoo! ***www.yahoo.com***
Yell ***www.yell.co.uk*** ■

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+ registration fee: £6.70 per year. Prices exclude VAT

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OUR PROMISE TO YOU... Ours are the lowest prices in the world. We don't charge a transfer fee and we'll give you double the difference back if you find a cheaper price anywhere else.**

**See website for full terms

ADVICE CENTRE

Net help that's one step smarter

@ CHANNELS ://

> TESTED SEARCH ENGINES 90
Still timidly looking for things through Yahoo! or MSN? We show you how to search more efficiently with 10 of the best search engines on the planet

> Q&A and GLOSSARY 96
All your technical queries patiently answered by our Internet wizards. Plus: don't know your HTTP from your HTML? Consult our handy phrasebook

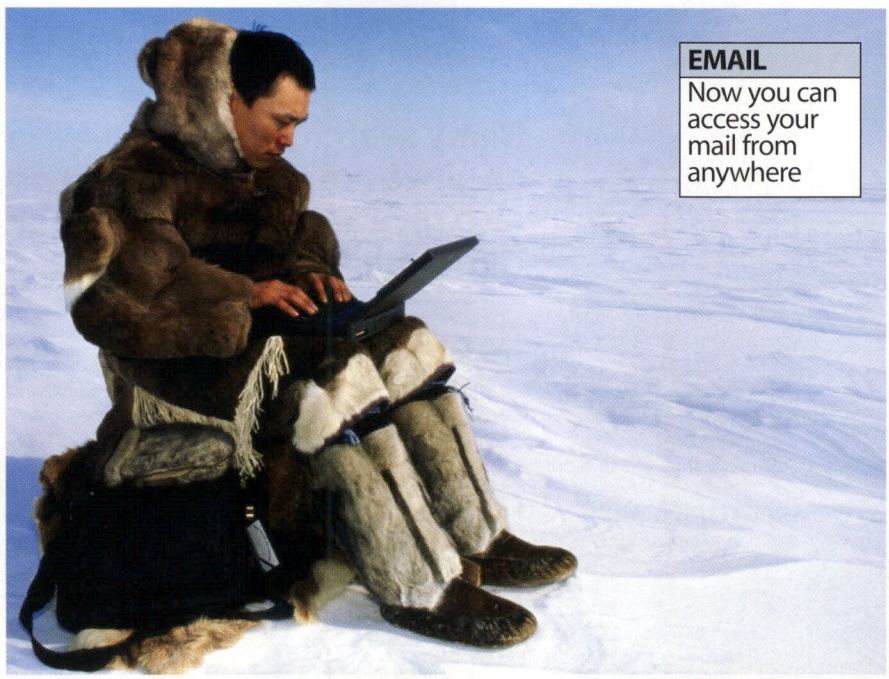
> THE TOP 50 ISPs 104
Exclusive independent lab tests of the best UK providers, ranked and rated in order of excellence (or otherwise)

> ISP NEWS 107
World Online pulls its phone plug out and AOL hikes its prices in France

> THE BASICS 110
Can't choose an ISP? We help you pick a provider which best suits your needs by identifying your surfer type

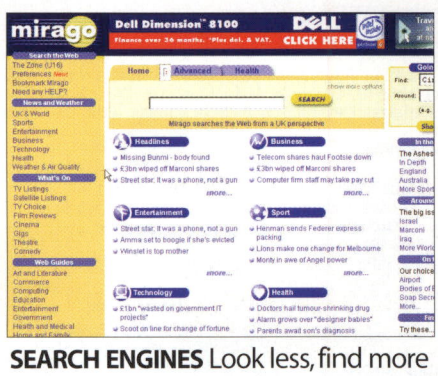
> EMAIL 112
Like the chap on the right, you can access your email anywhere. Our four-page special helps you make the most of your mail – wherever you want it

> MESSAGE BOARDS 116
How to make the most of discussion forums, which allow users to post opinions to each other all day long

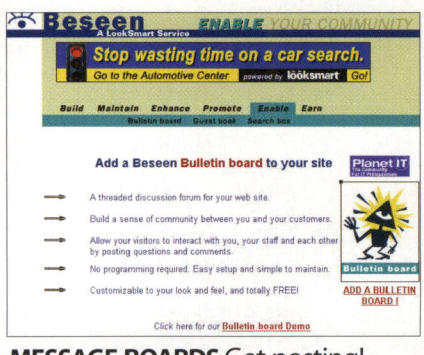


EMAIL
Now you can access your mail from anywhere

PICTURES: STONE



SEARCH ENGINES Look less, find more


Beseen
ENABLE YOUR COMMUNITY
Stop wasting time on a car search.
Go to the Automotive Center
looksmart
Go!
Build
Maintain
Enhance
Promote
Enable
Earn
Add a Beseen Bulletin board to your site
Planet IT
A threaded discussion forum for your web site.
Build a sense of community between you and your customers.
Allow your visitors to interact with you, your staff and each other by posting questions and comments.
No programming required. Easy setup and simple to maintain.
Customizable to your look and feel, and totally FREE!
Bulletin board
ADD A BULLETIN BOARD !
Click here for our Bulletin board Demo

MESSAGE BOARDS Get posting!

Find your target online

Search engines are a powerful and essential tool, but which one helps you find things fastest?

THE WEB IS FULL OF FLOTSAM AND JETSAM, BUT we know that the information we want is floating around out there somewhere. It's all very well being able to go to a specific site we know the address of but sometimes we need to be able to look at a list of sites on a particular topic or find out the answer to a question.

That's why we all use search engines. It might be the one on our ISP's home page (an easy but possibly lazy option), a large independent like Google, or one of the many thousands of specialist engines. Given that no one has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the ever-expanding Internet , the majority of us tend to use a search engine most times that we're on the Web. But do we actually use them properly? And, more importantly, are we using one that best suits our needs?

DIRECTORIES SAVE YOU TIME

In addition to search engines, there are also Web directories. Contrary to popular belief, Yahoo! (***www.yahoo.co.uk***) is not a search engine, it's a directory. The difference is simple – directories sort the Web into categories, so if you want information on UK football teams from Yahoo!, you can click on UK from the front page, then Recreation and Sport. You'll eventually have followed this categorisation: Regional > Countries > United Kingdom > Recreation and Sport > Sport > Football. And because it's all categorised, you can also click on Sport on the front page and then click on Football before asking to be shown UK-specific sites. When you search for 'UK football teams' in Yahoo!, it will show you UK football categories first and then follow this up by a list of specific sites from those categories. Which, you can't deny, is rather helpful.

Many search engines now also give you directories

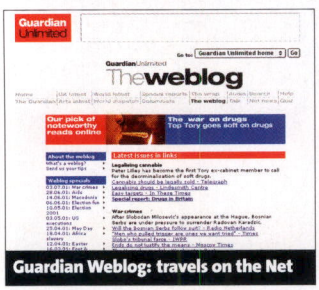
The difference between search engines and directories is becoming more and more blurred – many search engines will now also give you

Calendar
Messenger
Check Email
YAHOO!
What's New
Personalize
Help
claim-your-name.com
claim it before it's gone
Credit you can live with.
0% Intro APR
JUNIPER!
Yahoo! by Phone
Listen to your email by phone
Search
advanced search
Y! Shopping Depts: Books, CDs, Computers, DVDs Stores: Bluefly, ShopNBC, Barnes&Noble, and more
Shop Auctions · Autos · Classifieds · Shopping · Travel · Yellow Pgs · Maps Media Finance/Quotes · News · Sports · Weather
Connect Careers · Chat · Clubs · GeoCities · Greetings · Mail · Members · Messenger · Mobile · Personals · People Search · Photos
Personal Addr Book · Briefcase · Calendar · My Yahoo! · PayDirect Fun Games · Kids · Movies · Music · Radio · TV more...
Yahoo! Auctions - Bid, buy, or sell anything!
Categories
Antiques · Computers · Cameras · Electronics · Coins · Sports Cards · Comic Books · Stamps
Items
Xena · Jeff Gordon · Golf Clubs · Beatles 'Yesterday' · Barry Bonds · Longaberger · Pokemon · Morgan Dollars
Baseball Cards - McGwire, A-Rod, Jeter, Bonds, Sosa, Griffey Jr., Ichiro
In the News
Japan urges U.S. to hand Over Okinawa rape suspect
Russia mourns crash victims
'Sopranos' actor Iler arrested in New York
Capriati upset at Wimbledon
more...
Marketplace
new! Britney shops London: Episode 4 - sponsored by Pepsi
Y! Store - become part of Yahoo! Shopping
Arts & Humanities
Literature, Photography...
News & Media
Full Coverage, Newspapers, TV...
Business & Economy
Recreation & Sports

Yahoo!: it's not a search engine, it's a very good directory. Which, in many ways, is even more helpful...

FINDLAY

The Internet Movie Database
Visited by 8 million movie lovers each month!
Prepare yourself for the biggest, best, most award-winning movie site on the planet. First time user? Roll up your sleeves and click here.
TOP 5 DVDs - UP TO 25% OFF
Updated Hourly! Save up to 25% on these top-selling DVDs at the Amazon.com DVD store... 1. Citizen Kane, 2. Star Wars - Episode I, The Phantom Menace (English/Spanish), 3. The Godfather DVD Collection, 4. Classic Monster Collection, 5. Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon ... (more DVDs, soundtracks)
Yippee-ki-yay...Die Hard's on DVD!
The Die Hard Five-Star Collection is now available for pre-order. Starring Bruce Willis and directed by John McTiernan, Die Hard reinvigorated the action genre and made a bonafide movie star out of the "Moonlighting" bartender from Jersey. The DVD features two discs and forty stories of extras, including commentary by McTiernan, deleted scenes, and a cutting room feature which allows you to re-edit the film (not that it needs it).
Search the database for
Tops at the Box Office
Opening this Week
Coming Soon
Movie and TV News
Advertisement
Internet Movie Database: first port of call for just about any celluloid query



Guardian Weblog: travels on the Net

categories along with search results to help you refine your search. Furthermore, if you do a Web search through Yahoo! you'll find that most of the hard work – the individual Web page matches – is actually done by Google.

The confusion is complicated by a relatively new phenomenon going by the name of Weblogs. The Guardian, which has its own Weblog at ***www.guardian.co.uk/weblog***, describes it as '...an individual's log of the Web – a diary of Web pages to recommend to others.' So, a simple page of links, say on your own personal Web site, cannot really be called a directory, but you can say it's a Weblog.

For every searcher, the initial task seems simple – find what you want, as quickly as you want. If it's a list of sites on a particular topic, then it might be better to think more about directories. The main point about directories is that they're extremely useful. Try the Librarian's Index of the Internet at ***www.lii.org*** (like most search engines, it originated in California) and you'll see a whole listing of directories in front of you; a directory of directories, if you will. Indeed, in simple terms a directory is a list of sites on a particular topic. These, in turn, link to other directories containing lists of sites on different, perhaps more focused, topics.

So if we were searching for the character Morgan Freeman played in the film *Se7en*, we'd significantly improve the chances of finding exactly what we wanted by going to the Internet Movie Database (***uk.imdb.com***) first. But how do we find that site? Well, we can either find it through another directory or we could just search for 'movies' or 'films' in a search engine. So, search engines can also lead us to directories. Equally, there are directories of search engines like ZDNet's at ***www.zdnet.com/searchiq/hotlist***.

So if you're looking for any sites on a topic, look in a directory. If you're looking for the name of something specific then you're best off looking in a search engine.

PICK YOUR TERMS CAREFULLY

Experience dictates that it's best not to use a search engine by typing in a whole question such as 'What is the train company that runs services between London and Brighton?', even if elementary engines like Ask Jeeves (***www.askjeeves.com***) attempt to accommodate such queries. It's far more productive (and easier on the typing fingers) to simply choose keywords from this phrase.

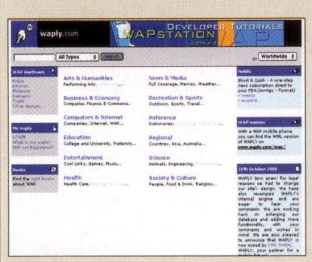
Remember also that search engine results can be altered by very subtle differences in your search terms. The key is to make your search terms as specific as you can. If you're after a well-defined bit of information, don't use woolly search terms – you're not likely to find what you're looking for on top of the pile. Searching on the Internet isn't as much about what you can find as what you can eliminate.

This is especially the case where abbreviations are involved. For example, AA not only stands for Automobile Association, but also Alcoholics Anonymous; ASP means Active Server Pages as well as Application Service Provider and so on. So try putting it into context by including an extra keyword or two.

You can also use inclusive and exclusive methods to refine or expand your search terms. Boolean search methods, as they are called, work using three operators – AND, OR and NOT. It's a very simple but incredibly effective idea, a good demo of which can be seen at ***www.kathyschrock.net/rbs3k/Boolean***. There's more about the subtleties of Boolean searching

Using AND can help you narrow the search, or you could add words

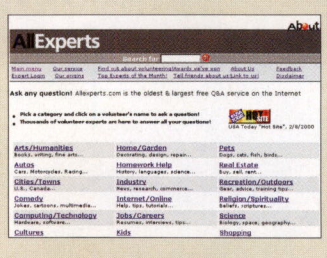
SPECIALIST SEARCH ENGINES FOR MORE PRECISE RESULTS



FIND WAP SITES
WAPly
www.waply.com
Got a mobile phone with a whizzy new GPRS connection? Check. Want to start delving into the delights that WAP should offer? Check. Then troll along to WAPly, where you can waste hours finding WAP sites that will blow your mind, via well-sorted directories or keyword search.

RESEARCH GREENERY
Plants Database
plants.usda.gov
The Natural Resources Conservation Service sounds as bureaucratic as it probably is, but they're the lovely people behind this gargantuan resource on all things Triffidy. Just tap in a plant common name, scientific name or symbol, and prepare to learn.

FIND GOD
Kingdom Seek
www.kingdomseek.co.uk
God's very own search engine. Kingdom Seek, run by Southampton-based Rob Strakovits, mixes both keyword search and directory facilities. A must for the pure of heart.



FIND AN EXPERT
All Experts
www.allexperts.com
Now this is the Internet at work: fire off a search on a particular subject, and you're returned with a host of 'volunteer experts' who'll solve your problems by email. Of course, some of these 'volunteers' have premium rate sites behind the free service, but on the whole, they're there to help.

PICTURES: PA, KOBAL

at ***www.searchenginewatch.com/facts/boolean.html***.

Using AND can help you narrow the search but, as always, there are times when it is unnecessary. Google, for example, will tell you off if it finds the AND operator in your search terms and politely but firmly reminds you that Google searches for all terms inclusively anyway.

You can also add extra words to your searches to cut to the chase. If you're after recent events, you could easily include the word 'news'. If you want reviews of Dido's latest tour, don't just type Dido, include the specific by typing 'Dido tour review'.

If you're looking to learn more about a topic, another good cheat is to include 'FAQ', meaning 'Frequently Asked Questions'. This will quite often provide you with a good backgrounder on your chosen topic.

Another good tip is to use the 'Similar Sites' button. If you scan down the list of search results and see a result that's the kind of thing you wanted, many search engines allow you to click a 'similar pages' button. Up will pop a list of well-matched sites and you'll have exerted a lot less energy in the process.

THE TOP TOOLS AND HOW THEY WORK

When a search engine catalogues a site, it's called 'indexing'. They use software – called a robot, a spider or a crawler – to follow each link within a site. If any of the links are external it then makes sure that site is indexed, too. Here the reasoning behind the names 'spider' and 'crawler' become more obvious. Spiders will also go back and check previously archived sites, though the time period between indexing varies according to the search engine.

Lycos: the ever-keen doggie will try its best to retrieve your terms as soon as it can

Many search engines such as Yahoo! and Lycos (***www.lycos.co.uk***) have also branched out and are now huge portals offering many different services. Another such portal is Excite (***www.excite.co.uk***) and if you search the Web for 'free email' it's likely to yield their free services first.

Different search engines are suited to different types of searching. Many search engines allow you to search using whole phrases by putting it in quotation marks. FAST, otherwise known as AllTheWeb (***www.alltheweb.com***), allows you to search for the exact phrase just by selecting 'exact phrase' from a pull-down menu. Equally it allows you to look for 'all the words' or indeed 'any of the words'.

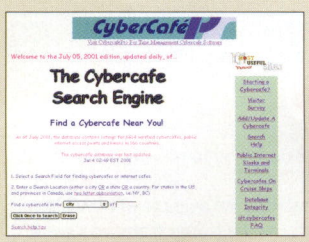
Though Google (***www.google.com***) is one of the newer search engines it has quickly become one of the most highly regarded as it works in a different and particularly effective way. It prioritises searches on the basis of links from other sites: if a site is regularly linked to, Google will give it more importance than John Smith's Gardening Home Page that isn't linked to from anywhere. While this might seem a little elitist, it makes sense – if a lot of Web masters think a page worthy of a link, then Google reasons that this means the page can't be bad.

The site now has a UK variant at ***www.google.co.uk*** and like the UK version of Yahoo! it allows you to only search UK-based pages. For an extra treat, try the new Beta version of Google's image search engine at ***images.google.com***. If you find yourself using Google regularly, there's also a superb Google toolbar (PC-only) available to download from ***www.google. com*** (under All About Google). It fits snugly at the top of your Internet Explorer window and will help you get the right result every time. The expanding Google has also recently taken over Deja, the organisation that archived over five years' worth of Usenet newsgroup postings. Google has worked hard to incorporate all the usability that Deja used to have and new features continue to be added. Go to ***groups.google.com***.

Keep your Google toolbar in your browser

ABOUT OUR TEST

We wanted to know which search engines really did deliver the right answers to the type of questions people ask every day, so se posed 10 questions to each of 10 different search engines and compared these results with five UK-specific versions. This allowed us to look at the difference between the results of searching ***www.excite.co.uk*** and ***www.excite.com***, for instance. We marked each list of search results on points. If we found what were looking for in the first search result, we gave the site five points. »



FIND A CYBERCAFE

The CyberCafé Search Engine

Cybercaptive.com

On your travels? CyberCafé has no fewer than 6914 cafes, kiosks and Internet access points listed in 166 countries. It's fast, it works, and you usually get a link through to the cafe in question. And if you're not travelling, it's fun just tapping in strange countries to see if you get a result.

FIND AN EVENT

What's On When

www.whatsonwhen.com

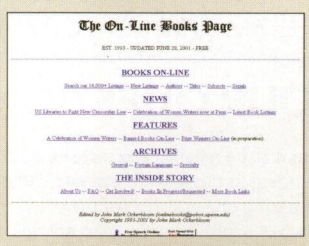
The best Net databases are built by obsessives. And believe us, the folk behind this gargantuan collection of arts events around the globe are sticklers for detail. On the day we visited, it spanned from a Madonna concert in the UK to the Sidewalk Egg Frying Contest in the US. Go there, if only to stare.

FIND A WEBCAM

EarthCam

www.earthcam.com

Tour the planet this evening. Earthcam is a searchable directory of just about every public Webcam in working order. So what if there is no functional reason for using the site? As with the CyberCafé Engine, you'll waste a perfectly good evening finding the farthest flung places to explore.



FIND A BOOK

The On-Line Books Page

digital.library.upenn.edu/books

The brainchild of a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania back in 1993, the Books Page will let you rummage through over 14,000 titles in seconds, a good many by well-known authors.

If it was in the second, we gave it four points and so on. And furthermore, we only considered the top five search results.

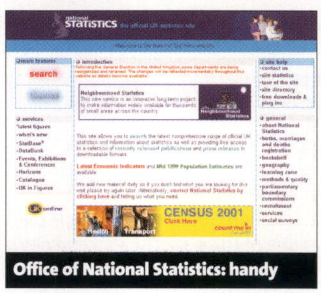
We also stipulated that the search engine had to provide the information we were looking for within two clickthroughs. This is because some search results took us to an index page. (In Yahoo!'s case, it included a clickthrough to another Yahoo! category).

We were reasonably practical about finding the answers to our questions. For our question 'how many UK top 10 hits did Oasis have in 1997?', we knew we weren't going to find any pages with the answer 'two' writ large. Instead our search results were mainly listings of all the singles the band had released. This, of course, allowed us to count how many hits they'd had in that year – that is, got us the information we needed from our search.

As we've already said, it's best not to phrase searches as questions, so our questions were all narrowed down to keywords (see the panel below). For example, the question above became the search terms 'Oasis top 10 UK hits 1997'. We were purposely looking for very specific search results – these were usually a number, phrase or name.

One of our searches – for the population of Birmingham – turned up different results on many sites. Some gave a specific number but all fell between the one million and 1.1 million range – except sites that counted the whole of the West Midlands region. In these circumstances it's best to try and go for the most official source you can, and perhaps searching through a search engine isn't the best way to go about it. Instead, why not try looking at it logically: for example, in this

Dotmusic: a good place to find music information, including that naughty Eminem



Office of National Statistics: handy

case, we know that population statistics are put together by the Office of National Statistics. Searching for that gives us their Web site at ***www.statistics.gov.uk*** and from there you can easily download the relevant information.

As we stated earlier, ASP was another slightly ambiguous term and it reflected in our results as quite often search engines found its alternative meaning Application Service Provider. If we wanted to find that ASP meant Active Server Pages, we should have typed in the context within which the abbreviation was used. If you're searching for meanings, another good idea is to use ***www.dictionary.com*** and ***www.thesaurus.com*** as these explain many abbreviations.

But what about our UK-focused search results? In some searches, for example, when looking for Apple's CEO or the Australian Prime Minister, the UK-based sites fared as badly as you would expect – the correct search results were much further down the list and so not marked. Again, there's another way – if you're looking for the Australian Prime Minister, why not search for him at the Australian version of Yahoo! (***au.yahoo.com***). This means you'll get far more in-depth information about John Howard himself, rather than John Howard of Massachusetts.

You'll also note that where there is a reference to something UK-specific, we've also put UK. This isn't so much of a problem for the UK-specific search engines as for 'Brirmingham' they'll usually find Birmingham quite easily, but you might find that a non-UK specific engine will find you results on Birmingham, Alabama.

IT'S OUT THERE... SOMEWHERE

Sometimes the answer to what you're looking for will be right under your nose. If you're looking for news on, say, the band Radiohead, try adding .com or .co.uk to the name. It sounds simple, but it can often save you a lot of bother. For example, the official Radiohead site is ***www.radiohead.com***.

The best thing to do is to try and build up a directory of useful Web sites in your mind, so you establish your own preferences for sites on different topics; it'll save you a lot of time and searching. Musical queries of any stripe will often be successfully answered by the NME (***www.nme.com***) or Dotmusic (***www.dotmusic.com***), movie queries by the Internet Movie Database (***uk.imdb.com***), acronyms by ***www.dictionary.com***, HTML tags by ***www.htmlhelp.com*** and so on.

Overall, the most important thing is to be specific. For example, if you need a new cable for your Sony camcorder, don't throw the very vague 'Sony camcorder cables' into a search engine. If you've got the product code, put that in instead, as if the search engine throws up a search result, it'll almost certainly be the right one. If it doesn't work, broaden the search only slightly to begin with.

For every 10 pages of rubbish on the Web, there'll always be one that can help you save time. The more precise you are, the more likely you are to find what you want first time.

SO WHAT WERE WE ASKING THE SEARCH ENGINES?

OUR QUESTIONS, SEARCH TERMS AND ANSWERS»

For it to be reliable, any test should be as wide-ranging as possible. To this end, rather than merely asking one question of the search engines, we came up with an array of 10 queries ranging across film, sport, statistics, politics, music (classic and modern) and, erm, badgers.

As explained above, we didn't merely tap in questions in grammatical English; we typed in search terms (ST) designed to narrow down the results returned.

And the final ratings? An average of how high up the search returns the (correct) answers were.

Q What character did Morgan Freeman play in the film *Se7en*?
ST Morgan Freeman character film Seven
A Detective William Somerset

Q Who is the Prime Minister of Australia?
ST Prime Minister Australia
A John Howard

Q Who manufactures PG tips tea bags?
ST Manufacturer PG Tips
A Brooke Bond

Q What does ASP mean?
ST ASP definition
A Active Server Pages

Q What was the attendance at the FA Cup between Manchester United and West Ham in January 2001?
ST Attendance FA Cup Manchester United West Ham January 2001
A 67,029

Q How many people live in Birmingham?
ST Population Birmingham UK
A Over one million

Q How many UK top 10 hits did Oasis have in 1997?
ST Oasis top 10 UK hits 1997
A Two

Q What is the nationality of the composer Schubert?
ST Nationality composer Schubert
A German (although born in Vienna)

Q Who is the CEO of Apple Computers?
ST CEO Apple Computers
A Steve Jobs

Q What's the Latin name for a badger?
ST Latin name badger
A Meles meles

Check the opposite page to see how well they fared...

OUR SEARCH ENGINE TEST

HOW THE SEARCH ENGINES MEASURE UP»

	ISP	URL	FEATURES	OVERALL RATING
	Google	***www.google.com***	Download the Google toolbar for easier searching	★★★★★

WINNER

Google was our most consistent contender, and proved why many believe it's the best search engine around. It only really faltered on our ASP definition and the Oasis singles question. The ***www.google.co.uk*** version was also the best of the UK-centric engines, too, although somewhat surprisingly it faltered on the Oasis question.

	AltaVista	***www.altavista.com***	Free email, and SearchTracker keeps your search records	★★★★★

AltaVista produced an 'all or nothing' set of results – either it found what we were looking for straight away or, as with the Oasis singles question and the manufacturer of PG tips, it scored nothing. Still, this didn't dent its position too much as those questions were low-scoring across the board. The UK search engine at ***uk.altavista.com*** also did well on the UK-centric issues.

	Ask Jeeves	***www.askjeeves.com***	Ask Jeeves Kids (***www.ajkids.com***) also available.	★★★★★

AskJeeves usually asks for questions from which it picks the keywords, and it surprised us by exceeding our expectations. It was only let down by three bad results, otherwise the result would have been even more impressive. The UK-based ***www.ask.co.uk*** search wasn't too bad, either, but surprisingly produced a strange set of results for Manchester United's attendance figure.

	Yahoo!	***www.yahoo.com***	You name it: free email, shopping, auctions and more.	★★★★★

Yahoo!'s results are a perfect demonstration of how a directory differs from a search engine – the results for ***www.yahoo.com*** are good, but only because Yahoo! uses Google for Web-based searches. ***www.yahoo.co.uk*** fared badly in our test as it does not use Google results and only looks for a Yahoo! category. Our specifity meant that very rarely did a relevant UK category pop up.

	FAST	***www.alltheweb.com***	Different searches for Mobile, MP3, Multimedia and FTP	★★★★☆

All the Web did fairly well, but didn't appreciate us asking for the population of Birmingham one bit. It also had a major problem with our ASP definition. Otherwise it was a fairly consistent display, with most of the searches scoring three or four. And it managed to find out that Oasis had two top 10 singles in 1997, often a stumbling block for many search engines in this test.

	Excite	***www.excite.com***	Customisable home page at Excite.com plus free email	★★★☆☆

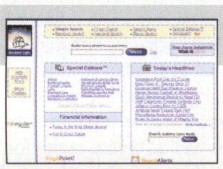
A generally good display and, along with AltaVista, one of the only searches where the results from the worldwide and UK (***www.excite.co.uk***) search engines were well-matched while being fairly accurate: ***www.excite.com*** did surprisingly badly on both our Apple CEO question and our Manchester United attendance query – it found neither.

	MSN Search	***www.msn.com***	Hotmail, communities, news, Messenger, MoneyCentral...	★★★☆☆

MSN search is what you'll see as your default search engine if you type an unrecognisable term into the address bar of Internet Explorer. It fared well in the second half of our list of questions, but seemed to have no idea who the current Australian PM was, nor who manufactures PG Tips. Not bad, but hardly convincing for the site that most beginners inadvertantly use to search the Web.

	HotBot	***www.hotbot.com***	Search in different languages; download HotBot browser	★★☆☆☆

It wasn't that HotBot didn't find what we were looking for, more that it was often further down the list, meaning that many of its scores were very low. However, it did triumph where others had failed – notably for the population of Birmingham and the name of the Australian PM. As with MSN, it did much better in the second half of the test.

	**Northern Light**	***www.northernlight.com***	Different searches for business, news and stock quotes	★★☆☆☆

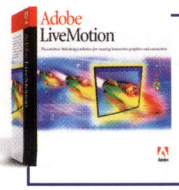
Northern Light produced some high-ranking results, but was let down by anything even vaguely UK-based. Oh, and the name of Apple's CEO. Still, it did help us to find out the population of Birmingham and even the manufacturer of our beloved PG Tips from the first search result. Sadly, though, its lack of consistency let it down badly.

	Mirago	***www.mirago.co.uk***	Plenty of excellent UK content plus a front page TV guide	★★☆☆☆

Mirago excelled in completely UK-based searches, but if you're looking for the Australian PM or Apple CEO then it's probably not your best port of call. However, it;s a worthy choice for UK-based searching and the initial portal site is excellent, with strong, categorised resources for UK information on anything from the weather to what's on TV.

Q&A

Whatever your technological gripe, our ever-willing team of Net experts always have the answers at their fingertips

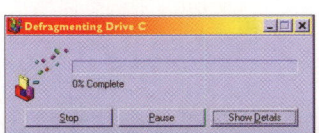


The sender of the Good Question wins Adobe GoLive Web authoring software, worth £280

DEFRAG IS A DRAG

Every month I defragment my hard drive to help keep my PC running well and get rid of all the rubbish collected in my temporary Internet files. However, this last time it never passes six per cent. I have had it running for nearly 24 hours and it still says six per cent. I continually get a message saying that the drive's contents have changed.

N WORDLEY, VIA EMAIL



Defragment: can take a while

There must be something running on your machine that is making your defragmentation behave in this way. If you surf the Net quite often, chances are you'll have something or other on your machine that you either can't stop running, or that you don't even know is there. It could be anything from an instant messaging client such as ICQ (***www.icq.com***) or MSN Messenger (***messenger.msn.com***) to a download manager or a pesky Internet Explorer plug-in.

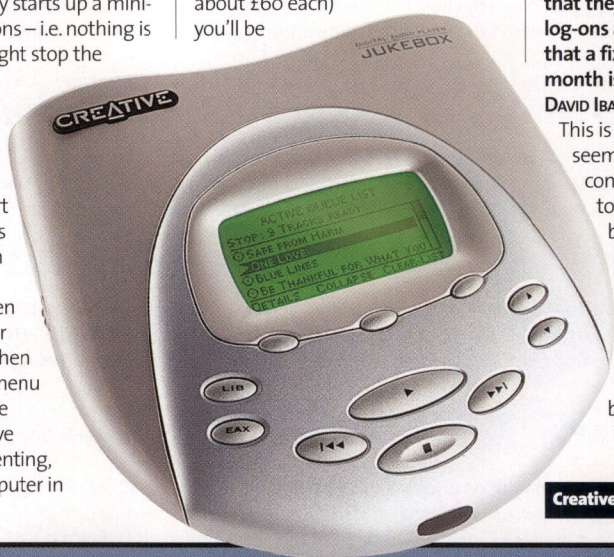
If you can't find out what it is then start your PC up in safe mode and then defragment. Safe mode is where your PC only starts up a minimum of applications – i.e. nothing is running which might stop the defragmentation process. This includes various drivers and any programs that would usually start up when Windows does. To start up in safe mode, hold down Control when you switch on your computer. Then when the DOS Startup menu appears select Safe Mode. When you've finished defragmenting, start up your computer in the normal way.

MP3S EVERYWHERE

I now download so many MP3s that I've virtually filled up my hard drive. I want to buy some kind of storage device so that I can keep them elsewhere. I've looked at recordable CDs and also at Zip and Jaz drives but can't decide what to get. Have you got any ideas?

RICHARD HEATH, VIA EMAIL

CDs have a fairly large capacity of up to 650Mb and in truth, it's probably going to be the cheapest storage format for you. For just a few pounds you'll be able to buy a stack of them. However, access rates are not exactly quick, and you might find your PC pauses periodically. Jaz drives (***www.iomega.com/europe***) cost over £250 and may be the better option. They offer superb flexibility – at 2Gb per disk (which are about £60 each) you'll be able to store a lot of MP3s and it'll be nearly as fast as a hard drive, so your computer will cope easily if you play the files direct from the Jaz disk. But if you are serious about MP3s, then for under £300 you can get your hands on a Creative MP3 Jukebox from ***www.creative.com***. This is a self-contained take-anywhere 6Gb hard drive designed specifically for MP3s and, as such, it won't put any strain on your computer.



Creative MP3 jukebox: 6Gb of tunes

DIPPING A TOE

I purchased your excellent mag yesterday ahead of my purchase of a PC. I am researching the most cost-effective way of hooking up to the Net, bearing in mind that I will only use it for an absolute maximum of 3 hours a week. Having enquired with a couple of ISPs from your top 50 report, it would seem that they're geared up for multiple log-ons and high volume users such that a fixed charge of £20 to £25 per month is reasonable.

DAVID IBALL, VIA EMAIL

This is a very common question. It seems that many people are still confused about ISPs, which one to choose and which tariff best suits their needs. That's why we've produced a beginners' guide to ISPs on p110. Hopefully it will help you to understand what kind of user you are and what kind of package will be best for you.

On a personal note, because

GLOSSARY » Terms and phrases to keep you in the know

ADSL
High-speed broadband Internet, otherwise known as broadband. In case you're wondering, ADSL stands for Asymmetric (or Asynchronous) Digital Subscriber Line. Just to confuse things slightly, in the US, it's often referred to as DSL.

APPLET
A program written in the Java language and included as an integral part of a Web page. If you see things floating across the screen, it's likely there's a Java applet involved, although don't confuse it with Flash. Also not to be confused with JavaScript, which is not the same thing.

BANDWIDTH
If you had a water pipe, you would talk about its capacity and its diameter; bandwidth means the same but for an Internet connection.

BROADBAND
The term for high speed Internet access currently being offered by many ISPs. For more information and news on Broadband visit ***www.broadband-news.co.uk***

BROWSER
A software program used to look at Web pages and other Internet resources written in HTML. The most popular browsers are Internet Explorer (***www.microsoft.com/windows/ie***) Netscape (***www.netscape.co.uk***) and the less well-known but extremely useable Opera (***www.opera.com***).

CGI
Standing for Common Gateway Interface, CGI is the standard set of rules that dictate how data is collected by a Web server. Forms are the most common use for these, and the Web page will use a 'CGI script' to send the information back to the Web server.

CHAT ROOM
A chat room is a section of an Internet site where people can 'meet' and chat in real time through their browser. Not to be confused with newsgroups. You can set your own chat room up by using a site such as ***www.beseen.com***.

Netscape: a popular choice

CYBERSPACE
A term originally conceived in William Gibson's book *Neuromancer*, it is now as a general term for the Internet or, more specifically, the virtual 'space' in which information is moved between computers.

DOMAIN NAME
The name that points to a site on the Internet. The domain is everything after the www in a Web address, for example. Examples include ***bbc.co.uk*** and ***microsoft.com***.

DREAMWEAVER
One of the most popular packages used to create Web pages. It's a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) package – meaning that instead of writing things in code, it enables you to write and format text as well as create tables for a Web page just as you would in, say, Microsoft Word.

EMAIL
Electronic mails are messages sent from one Internet user to another

you won't be spending too much time on the Net, it's probably best to use a dial-up account. This will allow you to 'pay-as-you-go', meaning that you'll only pay the cost of a local call each time you connect to the Net. There's usually no monthly subscription, either, so you won't end up paying for time on the Net which you won't be using.

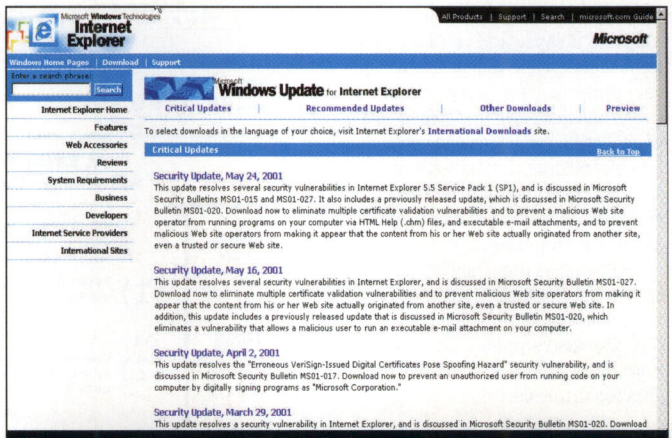
TROUBLESOME REMNANTS

Can you advise me as to the best way to uninstall ISPs? I'm trying several but cannot get rid of Freeserve completely, and as I now want to install unlimited Internet access I would like to tidy things up first.
PETER BUCKLEY, VIA EMAIL

To delete the connection itself, go to Dial-up Networking in My Computer and right click on the connection. You'll have a variety of options, including deleting the connection completely. This will remove the computer's ability to dial up through that account. Usually ISPs have a set home page, too. For example, when it is installed, Freeserve will set your home page (the first page you see every time you log on to the Internet) to ***www.freeserve.com***. You can change your home page by clicking on Internet Options in the Tools menu of Internet Explorer. The address will be displayed and you can change it as you wish. There's also a button to start up Internet Explorer with a blank screen – this is a good idea if you visit different Web sites all the time as you don't need to wait as long for the Internet Explorer window to appear on your screen.

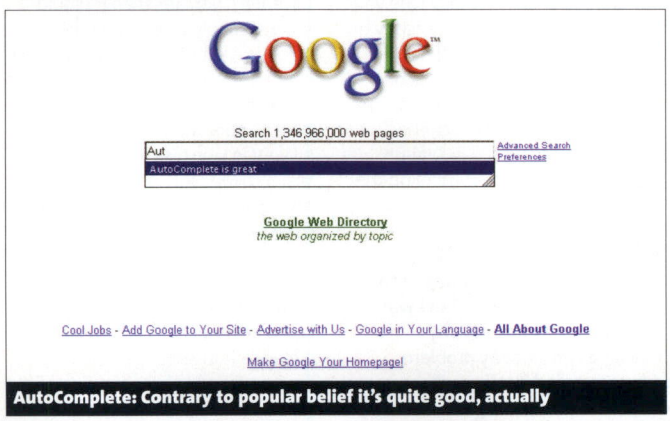
ERROR TERROR

I recently downloaded a new version of IE 5.5 Service Pack 1 with no problems. But recently I have been getting IE error messages which stop you in your tracks and you then have to send a error report to Microsoft. After that, Explorer closes down and reloads to the opening page! These errors are becoming increasingly frequent and annoying – is there anything I can do to stop this problem happening?
MATTHEW PAUL, VIA EMAIL



Microsoft has a library of downloads, including IE, available at *www.microsoft.com*

In a situation like this, the best advice is to reinstall. It might be a conflict with Internet Explorer, or there might be a problem with the »


Google
Search 1,346,966,000 web pages
Aut
AutoComplete is great
Advanced Search
Preferences
Google Web Directory
the web organized by topic
Cool Jobs - Add Google to Your Site - Advertise with Us - Google in Your Language - All About Google
Make Google Your Homepage!
AutoComplete: Contrary to popular belief it's quite good, actually

Q&A GOOD QUESTION

AUTOCOMPLETE IN IE

When putting in a new search at Google (*www.google.co.uk*) I see that previous searches made come up on a drop down window. How do I clear this to ensure privacy?
JACKIE NASH, VIA EMAIL

Don't worry! The contents of your drop down window are stored on your own computer and nobody else will see them. It's a natty little feature in later versions of Internet Explorer called AutoComplete. Depending on how it is set, AutoComplete will remember passwords plus Web addresses you've recently visited. You can alter the settings by going to Internet Options in the Control Panel and then clicking on Content. We recommend leaving AutoComplete on, as it can save you a lot of time. If you wanted to go a stage further, you can even download an application such as RoboForm (available free from ***www.roboform.com***) to auto-fill the forms you encounter on various Web sites.

through an email account. Often, the second part of an email address (after the '@') will be a domain name, but an email address is not to be confused with a URL.

FAQ

An FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document contains just that – a selection of the most common questions on individual topics. Many companies (including almost all ISPs) use them so their customers or users don't have to contact them with simple queries.

FIREWALL

If you use a network at work to access the Internet, your company may have a firewall. This reduces the threat of viruses and other unwanted downloads. Individual users can also get hold of firewall software.

TERM OF THE MONTH COOKIE

A cookie is a file that left on your computer by a Web site. This file contains information about your visit and any information you might have left on the site, possibly including your username and password if you entered one. You can turn cookies off in your Preferences, but some sites won't work without them. They are stored in the Cookies directory within the Windows directory on your hard drive and can be deleted. See *www.cookiecentral.com* for more info.

FIREWORKS

One of the most popular packages made specifically for the purpose of creating pictures for the Internet, usually in the form of .gif or .jpg files.

FLASH

Flash has become one of the most popular ways to create moving graphical images on the Web. The benefit is that the file sizes are very small, so they download quickly even over a 56Kb modem.

FRONTPAGE

Another of the most popular packages for creating Web pages, principally because FrontPage is part of Microsoft's Office suite.

FTP

File Transfer Protocol is the way in which files are uploaded and downloaded to and from Web sites using an FTP Client such as WS_FTP. For more details, see ***www.ipswitch.com***.

GIF

One of the two main formats for images on the Web, the second being .jpg. Gifs are used for flatter graphics such as logos.

GOLIVE

Another popular package for creating Web pages. See ***www.adobe.com/products/golive***, or get it free by sending in a Good Question to Q&A (see opposite page).

HOME PAGE

Most often used to mean the page which is shown when your browser starts up. This can be changed by going to Internet Options in Internet Explorer's Tools menu or in Netscape's Preferences.

HTML

Standing for HyperText Markup Language, HTML is the code behind a Web page. It's simpler than you'd think and consists of just a few codes which are written in plain text. A browser is required for the files to be interpreted. »

Service Pack. Service Pack 2 is now available, anyway, and you'll probably find that a reinstall will solve your problem. It's a common problem when installing updates to software – other programs can sometimes come into conflict with new updates, meaning there will be a problem when you run two pieces of software together.

Annoying as they may be, when Microsoft error reports appear, you should always OK them, as it's the only way the company can learn from bugs such as this and work to improve future versions.

TWO BETTER THAN ONE

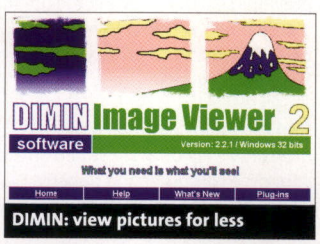
I am an absolute beginner with computers. Having just purchased a PC from Tiny, I have Tiny Online installed but would like to change to BTInternet, though I may leave Tiny Online connected as a back-up. I have a CD sent to me by BT and I would be very grateful if you could give me some tips on installing the new ISP. My problem is that at the moment I don't quite understand how two ISPs can be connected to the Net at the same time. If they both use Internet Explorer and they both use Outlook Express, could this cause some kind of overlap or confusion between the two ISPs?

M W Smith, via email

Firstly, the two ISPs cannot be 'connected' at the same time: they just reside on the computer waiting for you to choose which one to connect. If you go into My Computer and click on Dial-up Networking, you'll see the connections you have on your computer. Double-clicking one of them will bring up the same box you'll see when you first launch Internet Explorer.

The only problem with installing a new ISP is that when the installation process is complete, it will assume it is your favourite ISP (having been installed last) and assign itself as the default. In this case, BTInternet will be your preferred ISP anyway and therefore it won't pose you a problem. If you then decided to install an extra one as another backup, you'd have to make sure you changed it back. This can be easily done by right-clicking on the connection in the Dial-up Networking window and making sure it is set as the default. The network connection is also usually denoted in Dial-up Networking by a 'tick' symbol on the connection's icon.

Products, Prices & Sales...
My Account & Support...
About Easily...
Home
Shopping Basket
Easily .co.uk
Who are you?
be who you want to be with Easily.co.uk
At Easily.co.uk, a deal exists that will change the way you use the internet
www.
Type your preferred domain name and press GO
GO
Web Addresses www.easily.tv
It's your name on the Internet
E-Mail Accounts mail@easily.tv
Uniquely yours. Keep in touch around the globe.
Websites for All
personal & business beginners & experts
Powerful & simple.
(1) Register domain names or buy websites & e-mail accounts individually*. Just click the appropriate icon to the left.
from just £9.99 per year
OR
(2) Register a complete package, comprising any .co.uk web address together with a personal email account, your own easy to use website & more*,
all for only £29.97 per year
OR
(3) Register a complete package, comprising any .com, .net or .org web address together with a personal email account, your own easy to use website & more*,
all from only £44.98 per year
* All prices shown include VAT. No hidden fees - Guaranteed! Secure payment by credit card or cheque. Domain names also come with free email & masked web forwarding and
Easily.co.uk: get your domain names, whatever they may be, at reasonable rates



DIMIN: view pictures for less

FILE TYPE ERRORS

I recently installed Netscape onto my machine. Before I did so I was able to view pictures on my machine without any problem. After I installed Netscape it somehow meant that the pictures were only viewable through Netscape. Since then I have removed Netscape from my computer but I am now unable to view any images that I previously had or that people now send me. Every time I try to view these files it displays a message that 'Windows cannot find NETSCP6.EXE, needed for opening files of type "JPEG Image File"'.

As you can imagine, this is getting annoying. I am not completely sure what exactly has happened and how to remedy the problem, I just want to be able to view these images like before.

Megan Douglas, via email

When you installed Netscape it somehow became the application that your computer used to open images – it 'associated' itself with the .jpg file type. Now that it has gone, your computer doesn't know where to go to open pictures. You don't say whether you are now using another browser to surf the Internet. If you are, then it would have probably taken over where Netscape left off as your main application for viewing images. But what you really need is a new image-based application which will open all your image files independent of your browser. When you install such an application, it should associate itself with the file types previously changed by Netscape. If you then uninstall that application, you'll come across the same problem. You could invest in a decent package such as Photoshop Elements (***www.adobe.com***) or Paint Shop Pro (***www.jasc.com***), but it's probably not every PC at the point of purchase thanks to Mircosoft's ominpresence. But you can't quibble with the quality – it's the best browser going, shading Netscape's efforts. And it's available free from ***www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/download***.

GLOSSARY » continued

HTTP
HyperText Transfer Protocol – the method used to move HTML files across the Internet. As with HTML, a browser is required.

HYPERLINK
A link on a Web page which, when clicked, takes you to another page. This is determined by a command in HTML.

IMHO
Used in chatting, IMHO simply stands for In My Humble Opinion.

INTERNET EXPLORER
The most popular browser in the world, mainly because it's included with virtually

TERM OF THE MONTH: HIT

A hit is the number of files downloaded from a Web server. The number of hits is often mistaken for a variety of different measurements including the number of visitors a site gets. If one person visits a site and downloads a page with 10 pictures on it, this translates as 11 hits (including one for the HTML page). If there are any other files, such as Flash files, then these will count as extra hits. If the user clicks on Refresh, another 11 hits will register. Thus the measurement of a hit is very misleading, and it's why many sites now refer to the number of their visitors in terms of 'unique users'.

INTRANET
A network inside a company or organisation that is closed to the outside world, but that is able to be viewed by members of that company in the same way as they would view an external Internet page.

ISP
An Internet Service Provider is an organisation that allows you access to the Internet. See p104 for an independent assessment.

JAVASCRIPT
A language used in Web pages to introduce interactivity in the form of 'scripts'. It was invented by Netscape and, despite the name, bears no relation to the Java programming language used to make Applets. See ***www.javascript.com*** for more information and downloadable scripts for you to use.

JPEG
One of the two main formats for producing images on the Web, the other being Gif. Jpegs (suffix .jpg) are used for photos and more complex Web graphics.

MAILING LIST
A system whereby someone can send an email to a database of Internet users that have signed up with their service. Often, people can reply to the list with their own thoughts. In turn, that email is sent to all the users on the database.

MODEM
Shortened from MOdulator/DEModulator. This is the device, often inside your computer (but sometimes external), that allows you to connect to the Internet.

COME AND MEET US

Want to meet *the net*'s team of experts in the flesh? Then come to Live 2001, the UK's biggest and best consumer electronics show. It hits the Birmingham NEC from 21-23 September, so put the date in your diary now – or you could always visit the show's site at *www.livexpo.co.uk*.

going to be worth your while. Instead, why not download a package such as Image Viewer 2 from ***www.dimin.net***.

UPLOADING FILES

I have created a new Web site using Macromedia Dreamweaver and have it stored in a folder on my hard drive. I'm now looking to upload it to some Web space but I need some FTP software. What does this mean and how can I get hold of some? I'm on a limited budget and would appreciate it if you took this into consideration when you give me some advice!
JAMES GEDWORTH, VIA EMAIL

The solution may be easier than you think, James, as Dreamweaver includes its own FTP software, commonly referred to as an FTP 'client'. The name 'client' is because it connects to a server – therefore your computer becomes a client of the server. As you'll see from our brand new glossary below, FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol and, as the name suggests, it basically means the movement of files between computers on the Internet – whether it's uploading (as in this case) or downloading.

Assuming you haven't got any Web space, it's easy to buy some from a huge variety of hosts on the Net such as ***www.easyspace.com*** or ***www.easily.co.uk***. Chances are you'll have several megabytes of space from your existing ISP, too.

You'll need to get several pieces of information from your Web host; your username and password plus the server and directory you'll have to upload the files to. If you're going to use the Web space belonging to your existing ISP, you're more than likely to already have a username and password to get into your Web space as it's probably the same one that you use to connect to the Internet.

FOREIGN DIAL-UP

I need to have access to the Internet while away on business and would like to use my Compaq PDA to connect with as a laptop is too cumbersome for me.

As I am continually travelling abroad I would need to have local access numbers. The only ISPs that I know with local access numbers abroad are AOL and Compuserve, but these run with their own software and tell me that the 32Mb memory on my PDA would not be enough to run it on. Do you know of any ISPs with local access numbers abroad that use Internet Explorer, as this browser is already pre-loaded on my PDA?
ANDY HANCOCK, VIA EMAIL

I live in India and my job involves travelling abroad frequently, mostly to the UK and Europe. My constant companions are my PC and my mobile phone. What is most frustrating for me is accessibility to email via my PC.

While in a hotel room, I can hook up. But at times when this is not possible I have to visit an Internet café. Is there any way possible whereby I can access email whenever and wherever I travel without having to depend on a hotel modem or an Internet café?
SARVIN WARDEN, VIA EMAIL

If you are frequently travelling to the same countries to do business, then it's probably best to sign up with a local ISP and then use their local-rate access to connect. If you're going to do this, consider setting up a Web-based email account as this is the easiest way for you to get your email wherever you are.

If it is email you're mainly interested in, you could always dial-up internationally – for the convenience of having access to email it won't work out to be too expensive.

PDAs: handy little blighters

NETIQUETTE
Quite simply, the etiquette of the Internet. Examples include: don't post to a newsgroup in HTML; don't send loads of emails selling things (which is too close to spam for etiquette comfort).

NETIZEN
Derived from the word citizen, referring to a user of the Internet, or someone who uses networked resources.

NET-SAVVY
Someone who uses and is familiar with the Internet and what it can do.

NETSCAPE
Now part of AOL/Time Warner, Netscape is the company that invented what is now the world's second most popular browser. You can download it free from ***www.netscape.co.uk***.

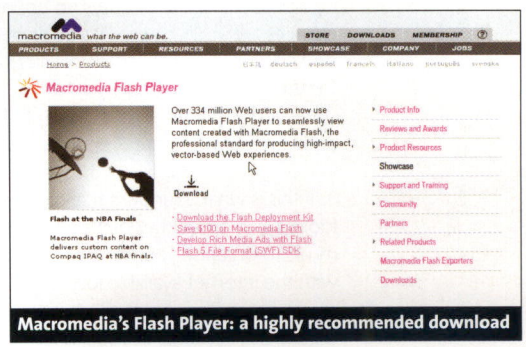
NEWSGROUP
The name for discussion groups on the Internet, not to be confused with chat rooms. All the newsgroups together are sometimes referred to as 'Usenet'.

PLUG-IN
A small add-on piece of software that adds extra functionality to a large application. Internet Explorer and Netscape use plug-ins to look at several types of file. Perhaps the most commonly used is the Flash plug-in, which has to be added to your browser before you can view pages with Flash content. Get the Flash plugin from ***www.macromedia.com/software/flash***.

PORTAL
A large multi-purpose site intended to be the first point of entry to the Web such as ***www.msn.co.uk*** or ***www.yahoo.co.uk***.

SPAM
Spamming is the delivery of a large amount of unsolicited email or newsgroup postings. Very annoying.

URL
Meaning Uniform Resource Locator, a URL is the entire address of an Internet resource such as ***http://www.bbc.co.uk*** or ***alt.fan.madonna***.



Macromedia's Flash Player: a highly recommended download

WWW
The World Wide Web consists of a collection of resources that work using – among other things – FTP, Usenet and WAIS, in addition to the HTTP protocol that allows browsers to view HTML pages and the files associated with them. The Internet itself also includes newsgroups and FTP servers.

INTERNET TOOLS & TIPS

powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.com

Making the most of the Web with Freeserve

SEPTEMBER 2001 | ORGANISER 100 | MESSENGER 102 | ONLINE HELP 102 | INSTALLING FREESERVE 103

Communications www.freeserve.com/communications

Keep control of your life

With Freeserve Organiser you'll have no more need for Post-Its and knots tied in handerchiefs

These days, life seems busier than ever, so whether your working day is packed with endless meetings or your social life knows no bounds, chances are you'll have a Filofax or other personal organiser that's almost illegible for the number of entries you've squeezed into it, and that's literally bulging at the seams with notes, reminders and lists of things to do.

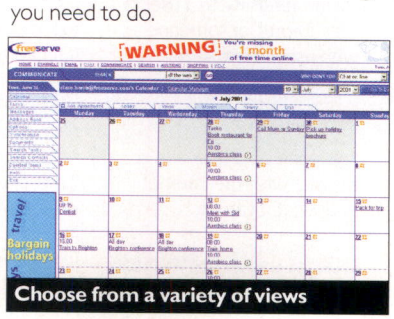
If this is what your personal organiser looks like, it probably won't be helping much to organise your life anymore. But with the Internet available just about anywhere you go, it makes sense to offload the contents of your shabby old diary onto a special place on the Web.

That special place is the new Freeserve Organiser (at ***www.freeserve.com/communications***), a free online personal organiser that not only allows you to store and edit all your arrangements on the Web, but also offers you a host of extra facilities to make a busy lifestyle a manageable one.

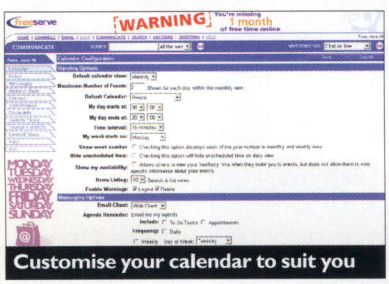
If you own a personal digital assistant (or PDA) such as a Palm handheld organiser, or an online personal information management application (PIM) like MSOutlook®, you can synchronise the appointments calendar on it with the calendar on Organiser so that whenever you change an appointment on one, it automatically gets updated on the other. That way, you'll have a current version of your schedule wherever you are. WAP phone users can access Organiser, too.

All you need to do to start using Freeserve Organiser is to register; it takes minutes to do this. Then you can go ahead and set up your Account Profile to customise your Organiser to suit your needs. You can choose what day of the week you want the calendar to start on, what time of day your want appointment slots to start and finish, even the interval times between each appointment – perhaps you'll choose to have them hourly, half hourly or just have a couple each morning and afternoon.

If you're the kind of person who always books more appointments than you can realistically manage, and end up being late for each one or having to make cancellations, you'll benefit from the option to choose a maximum number of events, or appointments, allowed to you each day. That way, you can avoid letting people down or wearing yourself out trying to do too much. And as well as an appointments diary, Organiser allows you to complete, edit and display task lists, so however busy you are, you won't forget the things you need to do.



Choose from a variety of views



Customise your calendar to suit you

You'll also get 20mb of file space with your Organiser – ideal for attaching shopping lists, notes of favourites restaurants, details of emergency plumbers and other information, or for images such as maps, directions or plans for your new kitchen.

Now it's all very well having your appointments noted in your diary, but if you're too busy to check it – or you just plain forget – you might as well not have bothered having a diary in the first place. Not only might you miss appointments all together, but if you don't remind yourself far enough in advance, you may not leave yourself enough time to prepare for a meeting or pack for a holiday. Freeserve Organiser leaves nothing to chance. If you want to ensure you don't miss an important appointment or a special event, you can instruct Organiser to remind you with an email. And by registering with FSAlerts (at *www.freeserve.com/mobile*) you can receive the first 140 characters of your emails on your mobile, so you'll be able to receive your reminder even when you're away from your computer.

Your personal Organiser will remind you of your forthcoming appointments

If you want to make sure you don't miss an appointment, instruct your Organiser to email you a reminder

If you need your colleagues, friends or relatives to know your movements, you can choose to make parts of your calendar viewable by others. By creating a copy of your calendar and selecting a particular view for others to see, they'll be able to follow the parts of your schedule you want them to know, as well as the additions or changes you make to it. Of course, as well as seeing when you're busy, they'll also be able to see when you don't have any appointments, so if you want to avoid them trying to suggest you add more things to do when you seem to be free, you can choose to hide all your unscheduled time so that they can't take advantage of it!

You'll always be able to print off any part of your Freeserve Organiser, so you can stay organised even if you don't have your offline gadget with you.

There's no reason why you can't make your life simpler and easier from today, with Freeserve Organiser. Register for free at *www.freeserve.com/communications*.

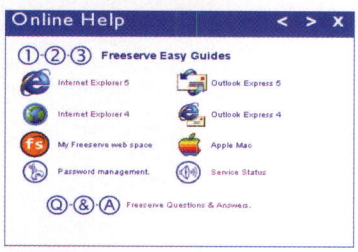
PICTURE: KOBAL COLLECTION

ONLINE HELP

YOUR PROBLEMS SOLVED

FREESERVE ONLINE HELP

If you've got a problem with the Internet or have a question about it, you can get a straight answer, straight away, from Freeserve online Help (www.freeserve.com/help). Read the following summaries of our four main Help sections to find the one that suits your type of query. Then connect to Freeserve and choose Help to have your problem solved.

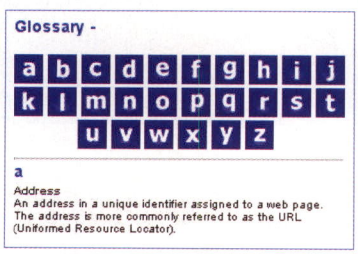


THE GLOSSARY

If there's an Internet expression you don't understand, you'll find it here in plain English.

THE EASY GUIDES

If there's an area of your Internet use that's causing you difficulty, turn to our Easy Guides for a solution.


Glossary -
a b c d e f g h i j
k l m n o p q r s t
u v w x y z
a
Address
An address in a unique identifier assigned to a web page. The address is more commonly referred to as the URL (Uniformed Resource Locator).

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

If you've a specific question, go to our Q&A section. Select the general area from our drop-down menu to find a specific question and our answer.

CONTACT

If you still need help, you can email our technical help desk, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They'll be happy to help. Direct email addresses are listed on the contacts page, or you can call the following:

PC USERS 0906 2517517
MAC USERS 0906 7234000

Calls cost 50p per minute.

Online help
www.freeserve.com/help

Freeserve Inbox www.freeserve.com/communications

An instant one

Even faster than email, Freeserve Messenger allows you to chat

Email is definitely one of the most useful and pleasurable facilities the Internet has given us, a way of sending a letter without the expense and hassle of printing it off, putting it in an envelope, buying stamps and taking a trip to the post box. Like a letter, however, email allows us to communicate with someone when we have the time, and lets the recipient reply when it suits them, too.

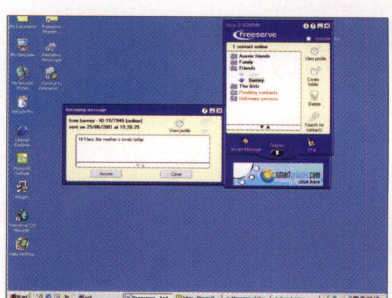
But while email is ideal for sending longer messages, it can be frustrating if you're using it to hold a conversation with someone, as a reply to just a short question can take several minutes to arrive. As a result, it can be easy to lose the thread if a message takes too long to arrive, and the frustation will probably lead you to resort to the expense of a telephone call – not the best option if you're making it in the middle of the day or you're calling overseas.

Freeserve Messenger (at *www.freeserve.com/communications*) solves these problems. Using the same technology as Internet chat rooms, the service allows you and a friend to read each other's messages the instant they've been sent, so that there's no delay between them. It's just like having a one-to-one chat via the Internet.

So that you don't waste time sending a message to someone when they're not online, Freeserve Messenger will tell you when any of the friends you've entered into your Friends List have logged on. As long as you're connected to the Internet, a window will pop up in the corner of your screen to let you know they're available to chat with. What's more, Freeserve Messenger is completely free!

It's easy to start using Messenger. All you need to do is register, download and install the free software (the install wizard will show you how) and get your friends to do the same. Then add your friends' Membership IDs to the Friends List if you want to be alerted when they go online.

When you register, you'll be asked to provide a few details about yourself, including your age, gender, the area where you live and your email address. You'll also be asked to identify your interests, such as cinema, music, entertainment, computer games, sport, the Internet or travel. Unless you modify your search profile to keep any of these details confidential, they will be available as search criteria for anyone who has Messenger. If you have told your friends your Messenger ID they will be able to use it to search, find and message you almost immediately. But by searching by location, age or interests, other people will be able to find you, too, and to introduce themselves to you. This makes Messenger a great way to make new friends. Likewise, if you'd like to meet people in your area who share your interests, you can do your own search. And if they've chosen for their email address to be made available to you, you can get in touch with them that way, as well.



Message friends with pop-up windows

powered by freeserve www.freeserve.com

-to-one

online with your friends in real time

Messenger is a great way to chat to friends while you're working on another task

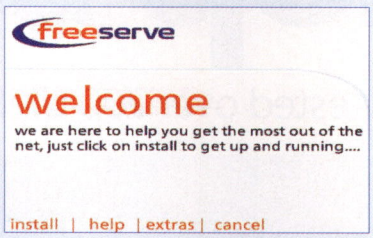
If you have the right software, Messenger will enable you to do even more than write messages to your friends. With Netmeeting 3.01 and a microphone and speakers, you can voice chat via Messenger; if you've a Webcam you can go one stage further and see each other as you talk. If you don't already have Netmeeting 3.01, you can download it from the Microsoft site; you'll find a link from the Messenger area at *www.freeserve.com/communications*.

Freeserve Messenger will tell you when any of your friends are available to chat

And because Messenger is protected by a firewall, business can use it safely, too. Freeserve Messenger is a great way to communicate and meet new friends. To get messaging, go straight to *www.freeserve.com/communications*.

GETTING YOUR PC ONLINE

OUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO INSTALLING FREESERVE


freeserve
welcome
we are here to help you get the most out of the net, just click on install to get up and running....
install | help | extras | cancel

1 Insert your Freeserve CD and wait for it to autorun. If it doesn't, go to the start menu and select 'Run', then type D:/setup.exe and click 'OK'.

2 Next, choose 'Install'. The helpful connection wizard will automatically guide you through the right steps to get connected. Click on 'Install Internet Explorer' to continue. If you already have Internet Explorer on your PC, it will now be updated.

3 A licence agreement pops up. Read through it and click 'I Accept' followed by the 'Next' button at the bottom of the box.

4 After selecting the destination folder for Internet Explorer (the installer will automatically create a new folder for it in the Programs folder), you get a choice of how much to install. There's a recommended 'typical' set of components, or you can pick and choose your own – if, say, your hard drive is a bit full. The wizard then takes over and begins the installation process. Sit back and wait to be prompted before moving on to the next step.

5 The wizard will quite possibly optimise your system to get the best possible performance out of it. Let it do so – it knows what it's doing.

6 In just a minute or two, a message appears informing you that installation is complete. Click on the 'OK' button to move on to the next step.

7 Wait for the wizard to automatically configure your PC to run the new version of Internet Explorer. After a few moments, you'll be prompted to restart your PC. Click the 'Finish' button and wait for your PC to automatically restart. If the CD does not autorun, double click on the CD drive icon in Windows to continue.

8 When your computer gets going again, it will update its settings for IE5 and Internet Tools. This is perfectly normal.

9 You're now ready to sign up to your Freeserve account. Make sure your modem is switched on and click 'Continue'. Your modem will then dial into the Freeserve registration computer.

10 You'll be prompted by a security alert confirming your connection. Click 'OK'.

11 A welcome screen provides two options. New members should click on the 'Create New Account' option.

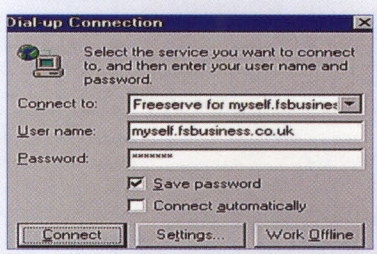
12 Take a couple of minutes to read the terms and conditions, and click 'Accept'. Enter your personal details so your account can be set up. Click 'Continue'.

13 The Help screen explains how your Freeserve email address is constructed. Choose your email address and password and click on 'Continue'.

14 Congratulations. You are now a member of Freeserve. Click on the 'Finished' button when you're ready.

15 When you launch Internet Explorer, it automatically contacts the Freeserve number and sends your username and password to the Freeserve computer (unless you uncheck 'Save password'). This is all you need to log on to the Internet.

16 Once connected, Internet Explorer takes you straight to the Freeserve site. You can now start to explore the Internet for just the cost of a local phone call.



Pick up your Freeserve CD from any Dixons, Currys, PC World or The Link store, or have it sent to you direct by calling 0800 970 8890. It's free.

powered by freeserve www.freeserve.com

PICTURE: CORBIS

Our top 50 ISPs

September 2001 We tested over 200 UK ISPs to bring you the best

RANK	ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	WHAT YOU GET	PHONE	NO. OF EMAIL ADDRESSES
NO MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION	**You pay as you go, making these perfect for evenings and weekends**				
1	Force9	***www.f9.net.uk***	Surftime, ADSL and free dial-up accounts for the home user	0800 0737800	Unlimited
2	Free Online	***www.free-online.net***	Straightforward free ISP offering news and email	0870 7060504	5
3	Sniff Out	***www.sniffout.net***	Free ISP with features, content and good technical support	01883 742510	Unlimited
4	Gateway 2000	***www.ukgateway.net***	Family-friendly ISP packaged with Gateway computers	Sign up online	Unlimited
5	X-Stream	***www.x-stream.com***	Uses on-screen advertising to offer 0800 offers and voice/fax	0870 7306466	1
6	Powergen	***www.pgen.net***	ISP from Powergen, the energy supply company	Sign up online	5
7	Freeserve	***www.freeserve.net***	Free provider from the Dixons group. Other packages available	0990 500049	Unlimited
8	Free Internet	***www.free-internet.co.uk***	Free access, email and Web space	Sign up online	1
9	Dabsol	***www.dabsol.net***	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Sign up online	Unlimited
10	Smartone	***www.smartone.co.uk***	Content-based service offering free dial-up and incentives for surfing	08700 774411	1 Unified
11	Go Free	***www.gofree.co.uk***	Free ISP offering online sign-up, complete with helpline	Sign up online	Unlimited
12	Freewire	***www.freewire.net***	Free ISP without any sign-up requirements - dial in to 0845 088 0088	Sign up online	Unlimited
13	Tiny Online	***www.tinyonline.net***	Innovative ISP with a beginners' guide to the Net	0900 290 9103	5
14	Virgin Net	***www.virgin.net***	Long-standing ISP now offering a stylish free Internet access service	0500 558800	5
15	OrbitalNet	***www.orbitalnet.co.uk***	ISP with a range of account options	01233 646505	5
16	Breathe	***www.breathe.co.uk***	Recently went into external administration, but still trading as an ISP.	0800 500150	5
17	Freenet	***www.freenet.co.uk***	Free access with a gaming bias. Online sign-up and newsgroups, too	01329 828282	Unlimited
18	UK Online	***www.ukonline.co.uk***	A family-friendly free ISP with plenty of shareware. Sign up online	01749 333333	1
19	Callnet	***www.callnetuk.com***	Innovative free ISP offering enhanced Web-based services	0171 3358300	5
20	Eisdosnet	***www.eidosnet.co.uk***	From Eidos, publishers of Tomb Raider and other games.	Sign up online	Unlimited
21	Wireplay Internet	***www.wireplay.com***	Gameplay-owned with fast access to games servers and the Web	0845 757 7577	None
22	This is it!	***www.thisisit.co.uk***	End-user targetted free ISP	0906 9124000	Unlimited
23	UK Fantastic	***www.ukfantastic.net***	Spirited free ISP offering good online technical help	0870 740 7777	Unlimited
MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION	**Flat-fee packages and specialist ISPs; ideal for peak-time surfing**				
1	Aviators Network	***www.aviators.net***	An ISP with aircraft-related content for the pilot and enthusiast	0700 2842867	1
2	Timewarp Internet	***www.timewarp.co.uk***	ADSL, dial-up and Web site consultancy	0161 950 8855	1
3	Internet in Nottingham	***www.innotts.co.uk***	Local midlands provider with a long track record	0115 956 2222	1
4	Luna Internet	***www.luna.co.uk***	A small consumer-focused ISP	01782 855 655	1
5	Paradise Internet	***www.pins.co.uk***	A subscription provider who also author software	01256 414863	1
6	AOL	***www.aol.co.uk***	A large ISP offering value-added services for the home user	0800 3765432	5
7	Compuserve	***www.compuserve.com***	ISP which offers proprietry software to aid ease of use	0990 000200	5
8	ClaraNET Ltd	***www.clara.net***	Subscription-based ISP with a range of account options	0800 3582828	Unlimited
9	Which? Online	***www.which.net***	A free ISP from the consumer affairs magazine of the same name	0645 830240	1
10	Demon Internet	***www.demon.net***	Tthe UK's original dial-up account dates back to 1992	0845 272 0666	Unlimited
BUSINESS ISPs	**Service providers for small businesses**				
1	Firstnet Services	***www.firstnet.co.uk***	Wide bandwidth ISP for large and small business solutions	0113 2944224	unlimited
2	London Web	***www.londonweb.net***	London based ISP with an emphasis on corporate clientel	0181 3494500	3
3	UUNet	***www.uk.uu.net***	Wide range of business solutions including multi-user accounts	08702 424220	12
4	CYBERphile Internet	***www.cyberphile.co.uk***	Business-oriented, Midlands-based provider	01543 454840	1
5	NewNet Limited	***www.newnet.co.uk***	Hosts some of the UK's busiest Web sites	0845 355 44 55	1
6	Knowall	***www.knowall.net***	Large business ISP for the SME and home business	0207 6101115	Unlimited
7	Nildram	***www.nildram.net***	Subscription-based ISP with a range of business packages	0800 0720460	Unlimited
8	AdeptWeb	***www.adept.co.uk***	Full business range of ISP accounts plus an ASP service	01843 850444	Unlimited
9	Netscalibur	***www.netscalibur.co.uk***	Promising pan-european provider taking the place of Dircon	0800 0720000	Unlimited
10	FDD Ltd	***www.fdd.co.uk***	A Netscalibur-acquired company	01865 321003	1
11	UKIP	***www.ukip.co.uk***	Internet consultants offering access and business advice	01772 908000	1
12	CIX	***www.cix.co.uk***	Long-standing provider with unlimited email addresses	0845 3555050	Unlimited
13	Charis Internet Services	***www.charis.co.uk***	Business-focused ISP with free technical helpline	0121 248 5800	1
14	UVNET	***www.uv.net***	Free ISP offering support on a national-rate number	01753 776699	1
15	Easynet	***www.easynet.net***	Subscription-based dial-up service	0171 6814444	Unlimited
16	Datanet International	***www.data.net.uk***	ISP for businesses in London and the Home Counties	01252 810081	Unlimited
17	GTS Netcom	***www.gtsgroup.comnetcom***	Dial-ups, Web hosting and leased line access for business	01344 395500	20

KEY **EMAIL ADDRESSES** *The number of free email addresses your ISP will provide.* **CONTENT** *Outlines whether the service provider provides exclusive content.* **MAC SUPPORT** *Not all service providers offer software and tech support for Apple Macs.* **MODEM SUPPORT** *Check your hardware to see whether your ISP can get the best out of your modem.*

Reliability, speed of connection and value for money are the criteria we weigh up to identify the best ISPs and award ratings.

Variation in modem speed
Measures whether you get a constant speed once connected. Each ISP starts with 100 percent and loses points with speed variance.

Variation in time to connect
The reading is taken from the stage between clicking 'Connect' and physical connection.

Availability
Measures how many times an ISP refuses to connect, through the engaged tone or failure to respond correctly to modem signals.

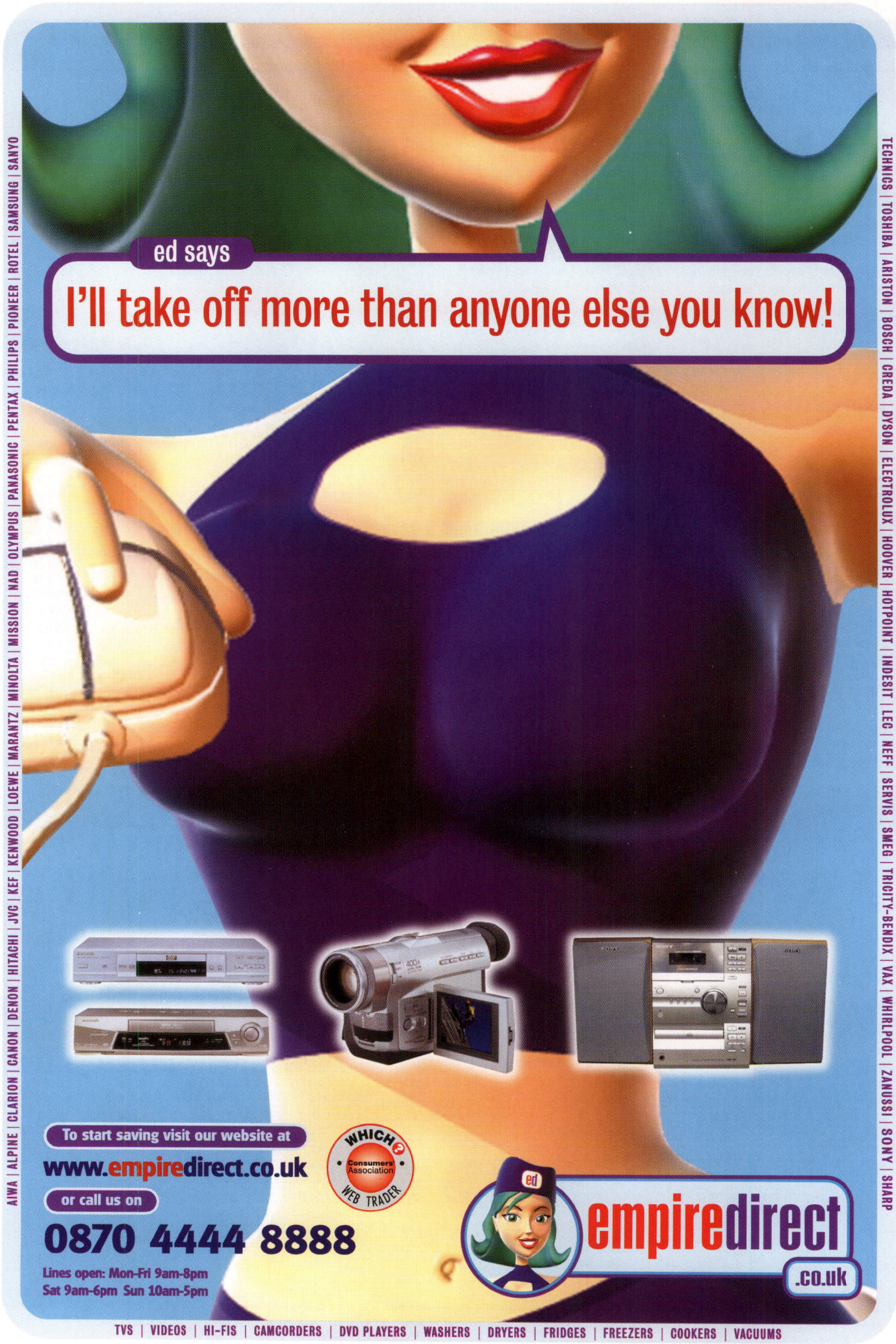
Our ISP testing is carried out by NetBasics, an independent company specialising in providing ISP information for consumers and businesses. NetBasics makes every effort to ensure that the data presented to you here each month is correct.

Thepublishers of *the net* and NetBasics cannot be held liable for any damages caused by the publication of this data. Any ISP that wishes to be included in the evaluation programme, or wishes to amend or verify details in our tables, should email ***eval@netbasics.com***.

For more information on NetBasics, visit its Web site at ***www.netbasics.com***.

ADDED EXTRAS	MAC SUPPORT	MODEM SUPPORT	SET-UP FEE (£)	MONTHLY CHARGE (£)	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS		VERDICT: RELIABILITY AND SPEED
None	Yes	V.90, K56Flex, X2	None	None	National	7-11, 7 Days	1	★★★★★
None	Yes	V.90, K56Flex	None	None	Premium Rate	24/7	2	★★★★★
None	No	V.90, K56Flex	None	None	National rate	24/7	3	★★★★★
None	No	V.90	None	None	Free	24/7	4	★★★★★
Chat, news and a range of other channels	No	K56flex	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	5	★★★★★
None	No	V.90	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	6	★★★★☆
None	No	V.90	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	7	★★★★☆
Newsgroups	No	V.90	None	None	Metered	24/7	8	★★★★☆
None	No	V.90	None	None	Metered	24/7	9	★★★★☆
Portal site with a range of links	Yes	V.90	None	None	Metered	9-6 Mon-Sat, 10-5 Sun	10	★★★★☆
None	No	V.90	None	None	Metered	24/7	11	★★★★☆
None	No	V.90	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	12	★★★★☆
Search engine and other channels, Tiny PC sales	No	V.90	None	None	Local	24/7	13	★★★★☆
A collection of channels including news and radio	Yes	X2	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	14	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	V.90, K56Flex	None	None	Local	Business Hours	15	★★★☆☆
Entertainment, sport, shopping, finance etc.	Yes	V.90, K56Flex	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	16	★★★☆☆
Games links	Yes	K56Flex, X2	None	None	National rates	9-6 Mon-Sat, 9-5 Sun	17	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	K56Flex	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	18	★★☆☆☆
Chat servers, channels and Webmail	Yes	K56Flex	None	None	Free	24/7	19	★★☆☆☆
Free access to the Mplayer games network	No	V.90	None	None	50p per minute	24/7	20	★★☆☆☆
Games news, chat and add-ons	No	V.90, K56Flex, X2	None	None	50p per minute	12pm-12 am, 7 days	21	★★☆☆☆
None	No	K56Flex	None	None	£1 per minute/via e-mail	24/7	22	★★☆☆☆
None	Yes	V.90, K56Flex, X2	None	None	Metered	9am-11pm	23	★★☆☆☆
Flight planning and navigation	No	K56Flex	None	11.75	Standard	9-9, 7 days	1	★★★★★
None	Yes	V90	None	10	Metered	9am-7pm	2	★★★★★
None	Yes	V90	None	10	Local	24/7	3	★★★★★
None	Yes	V.90	None	12.50	Local	8am-9pm	4	★★★★★
None	Yes	X2	17.63	9.40	National	11-7 Mon-Fri	5	★★★★☆
Massive amount of content and channels	Yes	V.90	None	16.95	Free	8-10.30 M-F 9-9.30 Sat	6	★★★☆☆
Portal site with channels and search engine	No	V.90	None	16.95	National	8-12, 7 days	7	★★☆☆☆
None	Yes	K56Flex, X2	None	8.99	Free	24/7	8	★★☆☆☆
40,000 pages of consumer affairs content	Yes	K56Flex	11.75	14.75	Free	24/7	9	★★☆☆☆
None	Yes	V.90, K56Flex, X2	None	11.75	Local	24/7	10	★★☆☆☆
Search engines and support.	Yes	V.90, K56Flex, X2	None	12.50	Local	Business Hours	1	★★★★★
None	Yes	K56Flex	17.63	14.68	Standard	9-9, Mon-Sat	2	★★★★★
None	No	V.90, K56Flex	Apply	Apply	Call	9-8 M-F, 10-6 Sat	3	★★★★★
None	Yes	33.6	None	11.74	Standard	8.30-6 M-F	4	★★★★★
None	Yes	V90	None	10	Local	9am - 10pm	5	★★★★★
UK business search and 12 channels	No	V.90, K56Flex, X2	None	None	Metered	24/7	6	★★★★☆
None	No	V.90, K56Flex	None	11.75	Local	8am-9pm, 7 days	7	★★★★☆
None	Yes	V.90, K65Flex	None	100 pa	Local	8:30am-6pm	8	★★★★☆
None	Yes	K56Flex, X2	None	11.49	Local	9am-9pm 7days	9	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	V90	None	22 pa	Free	9am-5.30pm	10	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	V90	None	125 pa	National	8am-6pm	11	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	V.90	None	17.61	Local	8-10 M-F, 11-6 Sat-Sun	12	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	V90	None	10	Free	8am-7pm	13	★★★☆☆
None	Yes	V90	None	None	Free	24/7	14	★★☆☆☆
None	Yes	K56Flex	None	11.99	Free	24/7	15	★★☆☆☆
None	Yes	V.90	None	5.87	National	24/7	16	★★☆☆☆
None	No	V90	None	14.95	Free	24/7	17	★★☆☆☆

SET-UP FEE *Some ISPs charge a fee to open an account.* **MONTHLY CHARGE** *If you don't go with a free ISP, then you'll pay a set monthly fee.* **PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES** *Tech support's great – as long as you're not having to pay a fortune for it.* **PHONE SUPPORT HOURS** *When the tech support desk will be open to take your calls.*


ed says
I'll take off more than anyone else you know!
AIWA | ALPINE | CLARION | CANON | DENON | HITACHI | JVC | KEF | KENWOOD | LOEWE | MARANTZ | MINOLTA | MISSION | NAD | OLYMPUS | PANASONIC | PENTAX | PHILIPS | PIONEER | ROTEL | SAMSUNG | SANYO
TECHNICS | TOSHIBA | ARISTON | BOSCH | CREDA | DYSON | ELECTROLUX | HOOVER | HOTPOINT | INDESIT | LEC | NEFF | SERVIS | SMEG | TRICITY-BENDIX | VAX | WHIRLPOOL | ZANUSSI | SONY | SHARP
To start saving visit our website at
www.empiredirect.co.uk
or call us on
0870 4444 8888
Lines open: Mon-Fri 9am-8pm
Sat 9am-6pm Sun 10am-5pm
WHICH? Consumers' Association WEB TRADER
ed
empiredirect
.co.uk
TVS | VIDEOS | HI-FIS | CAMCORDERS | DVD PLAYERS | WASHERS | DRYERS | FRIDGES | FREEZERS | COOKERS | VACUUMS

Users' fury at World Online

ISP closes its telephone service and makes over 250 people redundant

World Online has annoyed its 60,000 customers by announcing they have one month to change phone company. The ISP, now part of Italian telecoms giants Tiscali, is not forcing the change to make phone calls cheaper, but is instead axing its combined telephone and Internet package altogether.

Worse still, the ISP said it would switch users automatically to its 'preferred' telephone provider, Servista (***www.servista.com***) if they didn't find a new service within the alotted time. Many customers expressed anger at what they see as the company eventually forcing them to change to a provider they really didn't want to use.

Tiscali has already halved its UK workforce this year after buying LineOne (***www.lineone.net***) from BT and United Business Media, in addition to Liberty Surf (***www.libertysurf.co.uk***) and World Online (***www.worldonline.co.uk***).

It's thought that the company is working towards having a single branded operation in the UK and has axed half of its workforce as part of the process.

Tiscali is working hard to recoup some of its outgoings. The company paid over £62 million for LineOne but had already gone on a Eurpoe-wide spree of acquisitions which left it with a total bill of an incredible £2.5 billion – and an urgent need to find ways to cut costs.

Charity ISP undercuts big guns with cheap unmetered package

It'sGoodToGive, the ISP which raises money for charities, has launched an unmetered package which undercuts the industry's big-hitters.

The new service (***www.itsgoodtogive.co.uk***) offers a subscription of £9.99 which includes a £2 donation for charity. Yearly subscriptions are also available for £108, £20 of which goes to the good causes. At these rates, the charity ISP's pricing compares favourably with other packages from the likes of Freeserve and BTInternet.

John Ager, executive chairman, says new customers shouldn't be worried by the failure of other ISPs to offer unlimited access packages: 'We are aware that many ISPs have run into difficulties in the past with unmetered access and we've learned from their mistakes.'

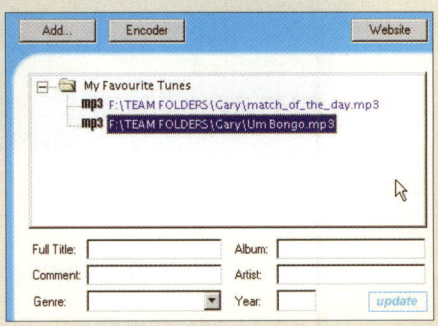
NET-FRIENDLY PACKAGES AND DOWNLOADS

THE MONTH'S TOP SOFTWARE »

A lot of fuss is being made about MP3Pro, the new enhanced MP3 format. If you haven't heard of it before it isn't the much-vaunted MP4. Instead, the format is a higher quality version of MP3 which is even more compact than its predecessor– the inventors claim it can take up as little as half the disk space of an MP3 with double the sound quality.

The format is the brainchild of the owners of the original MP3 patents, French firm Thomson Electronics and the Fraunhofer Institute of Germany. They then handed over to Coding Technologies (***www.codingtechnologies.com***) who developed the new format.

RCA.com (***www.rca.com***), owned by Thomson, has claimed that as well as the nice new MP3Pro machines being able to play MP3s, 'new MP3Pro files will play normally on old MP3 players, but without the dramatic MP3Pro improvements.' This isn't what hi-tech new site The Register (***www.theregister.co.uk***) thought, saying that '...existing MP3 players will reproduce MP3Pro files poorly'.



This is mainly because MP3Pro splits the sound stream into two parts – the original MP3 format only uses one audio stream.

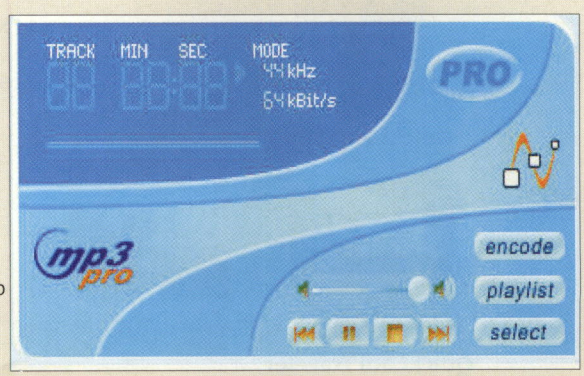
THE NEW MP3?

One MP3Pro stream encodes low frequency sounds into a normal MP3 stream which is the part that older MP3 players would play.

The second stream is the MP3Pro stream of higher frequency sound. This is the part that is ignored by older MP3 players. Thomson says this higher frequency stream was never a factor of the original MP3 format anyway, so nothing is lost by playing an MP3Pro file on an MP3 player.

The invention is potentially lucrative for Thomson and Fraunhofer as they can demand royalties from makers of commercial decoders (in other words, MP3Pro players) and encoding software. Currently there are royalties payable for makers of MP3 products, but the fees for MP3Pro are expected to be up to 50 percent higher.

Unsurprisingly, Thompson is the only company currently planning to incorporate MP3Pro into new hardware . The company has already made a software MP3Pro encoder and decoder available free over the Net.



fashion video

QuickCam Pro 3000

QuickCam Web

QuickCam Traveler
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AOL 'forced' into hike

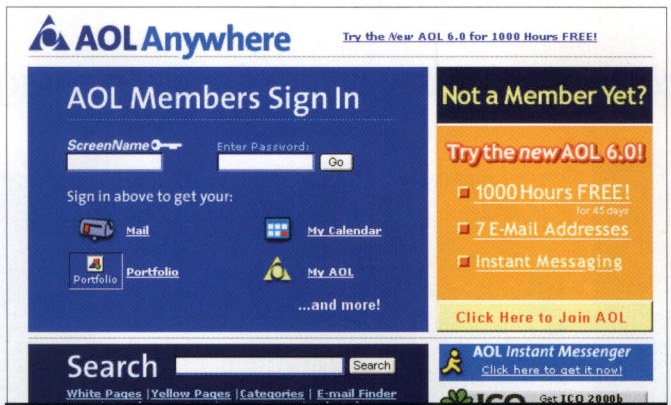
ISP puts up its prices for unlimited access in France. Are we next in line?

The French arm of ISP giant AOL is to raise its price of its unmetered access package by around £12.

It's not long since the ISP substantially raised its prices in the US. At the time of that price rise in May, the company claimed that it would not mean price hikes in other territories – it described its UK operation as a completely 'autonomous business'. But this latest price hike once again raises the question of whether the UK could be next.

AOL (***www.aol.com***) blamed the increase in its subscription price – from around £18 to £30 – on the new rates for unmetered access from France Telecom. AOL claimed in a statement that France Telecom's new price levels are 75 percent higher than the equivalent prices charged by BT (***www.bt.com***) for UK flat rate Internet access.

In addition to higher subsciption costs, AOL also said that ISPs have to pay metered charges on some parts of the network. It called the new rates a 'bad deal' for both ISPs and customers.



AOL: fears have been raised again over possible UK price hikes

AOL France had announced in June that it had over one million users in France. Its MD, Stephane Treppoz, asked France Telecom to look at the improvements made by Oftel (***www.oftel.gov.uk***) and BT to British unlimited Internet access.

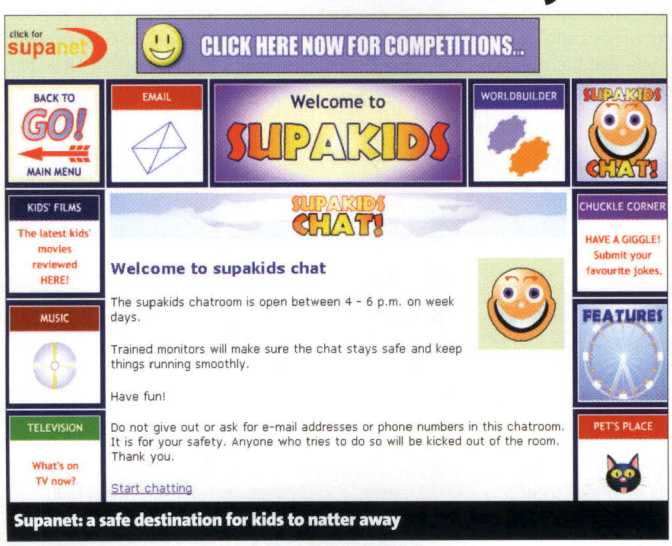
Only one in twenty emailers prefer it

Only five per cent of British surfers consider email to be their favourite way of communicating with others.

The claim was uncovered in Which? Online's Net Result report (***www.which.net***). It's even more surprising given that this figure was 14 per cent two years ago.

It's thought that the rise in the number of mobile phones and the mass acceptance of text messaging is partly to blame. The survey also found the number of Britons online is approaching the 16 million mark – around 36 percent of the population – and that 70 percent of users think there should be more regulation to reduce the level of Net crime.

Where kids chat safely


click for supanet
CLICK HERE NOW FOR COMPETITIONS...
BACK TO GO! MAIN MENU
EMAIL
Welcome to SUPAKIDS
WORLDBUILDER
SUPAKIDS CHAT!
KIDS' FILMS
The latest kids' movies reviewed HERE!
SUPAKIDS CHAT!
CHUCKLE CORNER
HAVE A GIGGLE! Submit your favourite jokes.
Welcome to supakids chat
The supakids chatroom is open between 4 - 6 p.m. on week days.
Trained monitors will make sure the chat stays safe and keep things running smoothly.
Have fun!
MUSIC
FEATURES
TELEVISION
What's on TV now?
Do not give out or ask for e-mail addresses or phone numbers in this chatroom. It is for your safety. Anyone who tries to do so will be kicked out of the room. Thank you.
Start chatting
PET'S PLACE
Supanet: a safe destination for kids to natter away

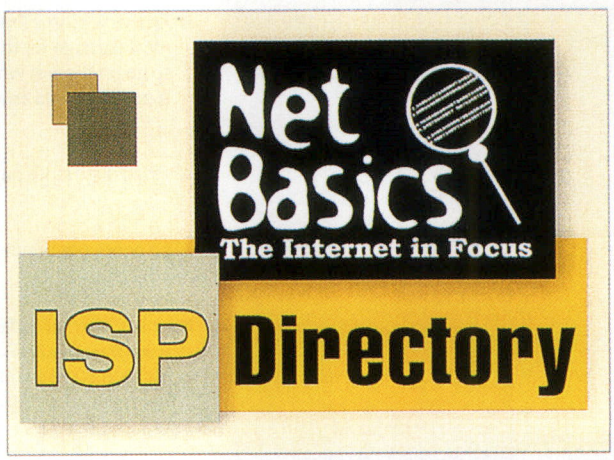
The UK's sixth-largest ISP, Supanet, has created a chat room especially designed for use by kids. An online survey among the ISP's users found that nearly 60 percent of parents are concerned about children looking at unsuitable content online.

Supanet's new chatroom is monitored by a trained supervisor and children will be ejected from the chatroom if they swear or 'bully' other users.

Another rule is that children are not allowed to exchange telephone numbers or email addresses in the room. It will be up to the supervisor if misbehaving children are warned or kicked off. Other ISPs are set to follow – as many parents are often concerned at the lack of supervision on the Internet, and especially through their own ISP's site.

There are currently two monitors but Supanet (***www.supanet.com***) may decide to employ more if the idea is a success. The service, called Supachat, is aimed at under-14s.

The service is available through Supanet's Supakids portal at ***www.supakids.com/chat*** between 4pm and 6pm on weekdays, just in time for the kids when they come home. It's got to be better for them than *Neighbours*...



Blow through the mist surrounding Internet Service Provision with desktop software designed by NetBasics, the leading ISP industry research organisation.

The ISP Directory features over 100 key facts and pricing information for nearly 200 UK ISPs including every industry leader.

For further info, visit:
www.netbasics.com

Net Basics™
NetBasics, The Internet in Focus
info@netbasics.com
Telephone 0113 246 0009 in the UK

Which type of ISP

Each month, we recommend the best ISP for five average Internet users

OUR USERS >>	HEAVY EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS USER	HOME WORKER
TYPE OF USER AND SURFING HABITS	Heavy evenings and weekends users are likely to download applications and perhaps the odd MP3 or two, and this means that they can often be online for long periods of time.	Home workers are likely to be sending emails with large reports or other documents attached. They're also likely to want to be permanently online with a fast connection.
BEST TARIFF AND CHOICE OF ISP	**Freeserve HomeTime (*www.freeserve.com*) is an ideal package for this type of use – it allows you to go on the Net whenever you want at night (6pm-8am) and any time over the weekend.**	**We recommend BTopenworld (*www.btopenworld.com*) – it's lightning fast and fairly reliable, although BT has been known to take a while to install it.**
HOW MUCH IT COSTS	£8.99 per month pays for all off -peak calls.	£39.99 subscription per month.
PRICE OF ISP HELPLINE	**50 pence per minute.**	**Freephone technical support.**
WHAT DO YOU GET?	Unlimited email addresses plus a decent portal at ***www.freeserve.com*** with Web-based email , groups, 18 channels of information and news plus other communication features.	You'll get your own 'MyOpenworld' home page, complete with email, news services, chat rooms and online shopping. What's more, you can access it from anywhere.
SUMMARY	**Freeserve's HomeTime package is one of the best around and you'll rarely struggle to get a connection, meaning you can stay online and download all the MP3s you want.**	**The only downside with BT's package is that there's an initial installation fee of £150. Still, the connection is fast, and once you've got it, you'll wonder how you ever managed before.**

IF YOU'RE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A new ISP the chances are you'll be confused about the huge variety of providers as well as the tariffs they offer. The world of ISPs is a minefield even experienced users still struggle to negotiate.

It's a good idea to compare the services of several ISPs before you sign up. The first thing to do is decide what kind of service you want from your ISP. That's why we've created the table above, so you can decide which type of user you are and what type of service might suit you best.

Bear in mind that there are far more ISPs than you might think. An ISP with a big marketing budget might well stick in your mind, but there are plenty of other providers that might suit your needs better.

Another important thing to remember is that more and more ISPs are offering a bigger variety of different services and tariffs. For example, one ISP might offer an unlimited dial-up service, an evenings and weekends service, a 'pay as you go' service and even ADSL.

While we might be able to split a list of ISPs into just a few groups, that doesn't mean to say that they don't also offer other services that might fit into another group. This is especially the case with large ISPs such as BT Internet (***www.btinternet.com***) or Freeserve (***www.freeserve.com***).

BTinternet: a variety of services

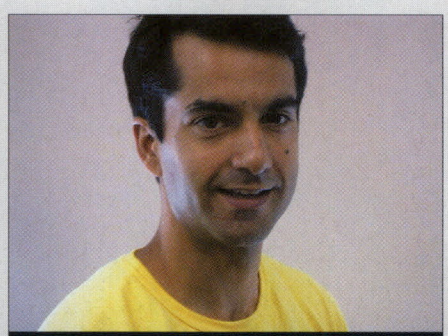
Another good idea is to ask around. What kind of service have your friends or colleagues had from their ISPs? If you've been told an ISP is good, visit its Web site and look at the services they offer. Do they fit with your requirements? Very often word of mouth is how many ISPs thrive or dive. Checking user reviews on the likes of ISP Review (***www.ispreview.co.uk***) is a good way

is best for you?

and explain the most common tariffs and packages available

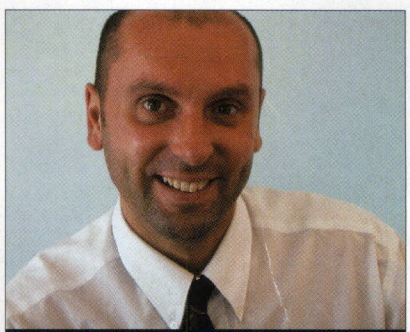
OCCASIONAL USER

- The occasional user is likely to only want to dial up and check their email perhaps once a week or check a Web site they may have seen on TV or in a magazine.
- **There are plenty of ISPs to choose from, including Dabsol (*www.dabsol.net*), the top ranking ISP in our test this month – see p104 for a whole list of 'No monthly subscription' ISPs.**
- 'Pay as you go' with local rate phone charges.
- **Depending on the ISP, can be up to £1 a minute.**
- Most non-subscription ISPs will give you unlimited email addresses, although this will vary. Many of these ISPs also have a portal with basic news and other information.
- **A light user would be silly to pay a subscription charge, so you might as well choose a tariff with only local call costs. Because you'll have no ties, you can also change ISPs very easily.**



SMALL BUSINESS USER

- A small business user is likely to need a reliable connection so that email can be checked several times a day and employees can connect to the Web with no problems.
- **We've chosen Firstnet (*www.firstnet.co.uk*) as it not only specialises in business, but offers ADSL in addition to dial-up Internet access, so you can pick the level of service you need.**
- Subscription is £10 per month with £10 set-up.
- **Local rate telephone support around the clock.**
- You'll get unlimited email addresses plus a portal site with plenty of information on ADSL and other services. Also try ***www.knowall.net***, another ISP catering for small businesses.
- **Both Firstnet and Knowall would suit the needs of our small business well, as both are adaptable ISPs whose level of service can grow with the business.**



HEAVY BUSINESS USER

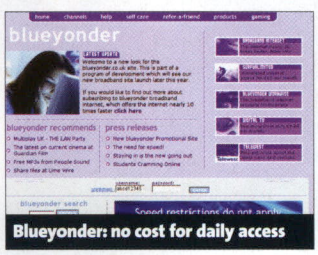
- Heavy business users will need a permanent, always-on connection plus access to a variety of email accounts. They may also be planning their own, integrated, Web site.
- **We chose ADSL from Netscalibur (*www.netscalibur.co.uk*), the business ISP which recently took over DirectConnection. The company also provides hosting.**
- The service starts at £138 per year.
- **24/7 telephone support service desk.**
- You get 10 email addresses, a domain name, email forwarding, access to Netscalibur's news server and emergency support if you have any problems.
- **A large business will need a solution that's not going to fail them or their customers. If anything does go wrong, you need to make sure that the support is comprehensive.**

to gauge whether certain ISPs have garnered complaints or praise from ordinary punters.

TYPES OF ISP

No monthly subscription

You don't pay the ISP directly, but instead when you connect to the Net, you pay the cost of a phone call. This is usually local rate (an 0345 or 0845 number). Non-subscription ISPs earn money by taking a cut of the money you pay on your call – effectively selling your custom on to whoever provides your line.



Blueyonder: no cost for daily access

Monthly subscription

As the title suggests, this type of ISP charges you a monthly fee to use its services. There are several types of monthly subscription ISPs so it's a good idea to make sure you know exactly what you'll be getting for your money before you sign up.

Some ISPs such as Blueyonder (***www.blueyonder.co.uk***) and AOL (***www.aol.co.uk***) charge a monthly fee and then make no charge for connection to the Internet. Others make a charge but stipulate when you can connect for free (usually evenings and weekends). BT offers such a service, as does Freeserve.

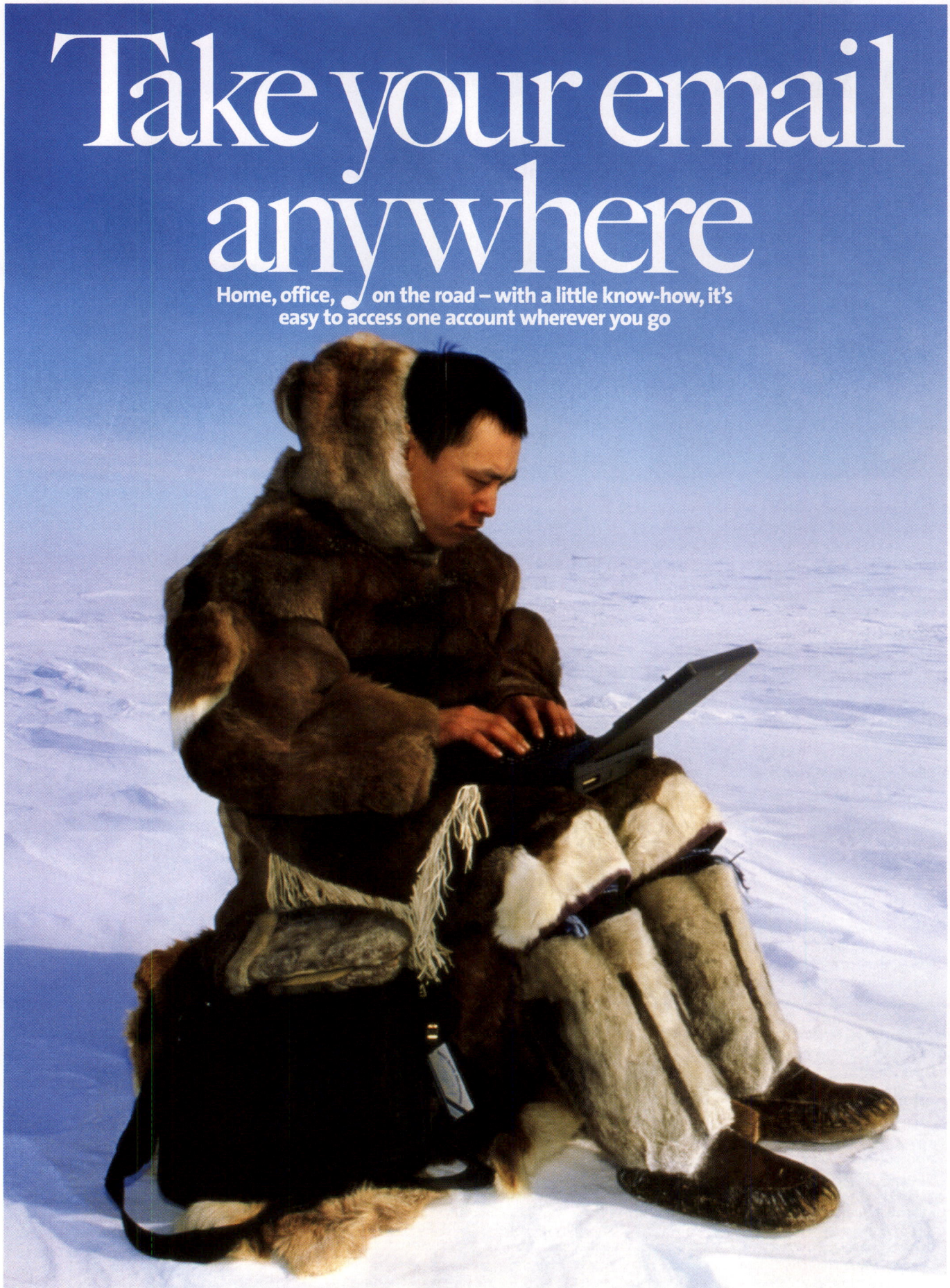
Others such as Demon (***www.demon.net***) and BTInternet (***www.btinternet.com***) charge for a local rate dial-up account which works in the same way as those without a monthly subscription. What you're paying for is the quality of the service – you'll almost certainly have no connection problems.

TOP TIP

Make shortcuts on your desktop to all your connections, so that when you need to connect, you can simply double-click on your chosen ISP to connect to the Internet before launching your browser.

Take your email anywhere

Home, office, on the road – with a little know-how, it's easy to access one account wherever you go



EMAIL: WE ALL USE IT, AT HOME, AT work and now on our mobile phones. But with the average Netizen having several email accounts, it's becoming impossible for Net users to keep track of their various email accounts – and that's before you factor in the occasional fax and voice message.

We're told that, one day, we'll all have all-singing, all-dancing mobiles that will whisk us anywhere in cyberspace at the touch of a button and that text messages will mean the same as email. But that's not going to happen this week or this month. So how can we improve the way we use email in the meantime?

The Internet: now available in a shop near you (and some far away, too)

FORWARD IT ON

The best ideas are often the simple ones, and the principle of auto-forwarding your email is one of the easiest things you can do to improve email usability. Say, for example, you've got an email account at work yet you also need a Web based account. It's all very well setting up a separate account for while you're away, but when you're back in the office it would be much easier if you could bring your accounts together.

The answer is to use a Web-based email service – such as that at Email.com (***www.email.com***) – that you can also set to forward your emails on if you're currently at another email address (say, work). Sadly Hotmail doesn't currently offer this facility, so you'll just have to go elsewhere. If you've already got a non-Hotmail Web-based account, it might well have a forwarding facility similar to Email.com. Check the settings on your account: you may be pleasantly surprised.

You can redirect email to an address of your choice

Alternatively you could use an email forwarding service like Bigfoot (***www.bigfoot.com***). Choose an email address, which will be in the form of ***me@bigfoot.com***, and it will redirect email to an address of your choice – even a colleague's or friend's account. You can then give the Bigfoot address as your new email address even if you know you'll be changing around, say for example if you know you will be leaving work in the near future but don't want to lose your contacts. And you can change the settings when you wish; no wonder it's referred to as 'email for life'.

BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

If you're still into old-fangled things like fax messages and voice mails then fear not; it's now possible to integrate them into the shiny universal culture of 'send anything anywhere' email. It's true that email is now more widely used than fax machines, but businesses are still always likely to get some blighter asking for their fax number.

Freeserve has developed a natty little feature that it has cunningly called Inbox. You're allocated a national rate number which people can call and leave voice messages. Faxes can also be sent to this number. Both faxes and voice mails (which appear in RealAudio format) will appear alongside your email in your Freeserve Inbox for you to read or listen to at will. If you haven't got the RealAudio player – and if you're using the Net to any great level then you should – you can download a version for free from ***www.real.com***.

Anyone with a Freeserve FSMail Web-based account or a traditional dial-up Freeserve email account can register to set up their very own Inbox at ***www.freeserve.com/communications/inbox***.

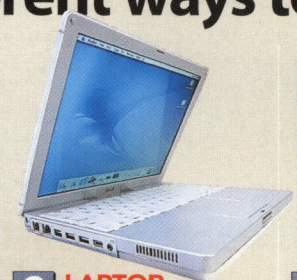
eFax (***www.efax.com***) is another free service that, like Freeserve Inbox, assigns you a 0870 national-rate number and allows people to send you a fax which then arrives in your Inbox as a .efx file. Simply download the free reader software available to download for both Mac and PC and, hey presto, you'll be able to receive and print out faxes. As well as the UK version there's also one for the US, too. For a monthly charge you can get added functionality – you'll be able to send faxes back in the other direction from »

HOW DO YOU GET YOURS?

Five different ways to get hold of email »

1 MOBILE

Got a WAP phone? You can get email through it. Many of these link with Web-based accounts at mobile portals like ***www.orange.net***, ***www.vxtras.com*** and ***www.vizzavi.co.uk***. You can read and reply to your emails on the move, but you can also read them while you're on the Net so you can combine your Web-based and mobile email accounts.

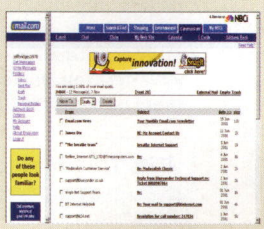


2 LAPTOP

By connecting your laptop to your mobile you can surf while you're working on the train, or email documents to colleagues. If you stay in hotels a lot, many rooms have connections to plug in your laptop. Because of their likeness to desktop computers you can either send and receive email through your Web-based email account or even a desktop email client such as Microsoft Outlook.

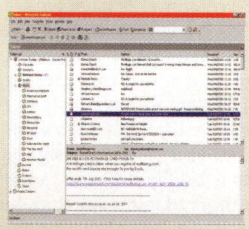
3 PDA

With many PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) able to connect to the Net it's fast becoming one of the best ways to get email on the move. Some are compatible with infrared mobile phones and many can be connected up so you can send and receive email. While PDAs aren't brilliant for surfing, some (like the Psion Revo Plus) let you surf WAP sites and send text messages.



4 BROWSER

Hotmail (***www.hotmail.com***) is the world's most popular Web-based email account, but there are others: try Email.com (***www.email.com***) or Another.com (***www.another.com***), where you can even choose your own customised email address. It's a great way to keep in touch with your friends and colleagues when you're moving from place to place – wherever there's the Net, you can send email.



5 DESKTOP

Desktop email clients such as Microsoft Outlook use what are known as POP3 email accounts and sit on your normal desktop computer. These are often provided by the ISP you surf with, and usually have the same username and password as your dial-up connection. Turn the page for our pick of the best email applications around; many are free to download.

PICTURES: STONE, PA

your computer to a fax machine. The site offers a variety of other paid-for services, too, including a Corporate service for heavy users.

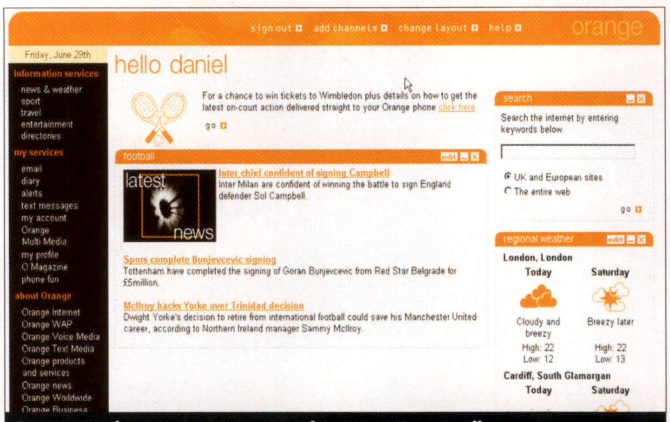
MOBILE MANIA

WAP is no stranger to email, and if you have a WAP phone it's not too much of a problem to set up an account. Thankfully, the mobile phone companies have realised that many WAP-savvy users also have access to the Internet, and they're making it easier to integrate your phone with email and other services and alerts they offer on the Net.

If you've got a Internet-compliant PDA such as the Compaq iPAQ (***www.compaq.co.uk***) or the Psion Revo Plus (***www.psion.com***), chances are you can send and receive email from your lovely little machine.

It certainly makes the chore of typing emails much easier, since you can type and send from wherever you wish through a normal dial-up account. It also allows you to make great use of downtime by allowing you to reply to your emails when you have a bit of spare time, such as when you're waiting for a train or are standing in the post office queue. Although, be warned, you might look a bit silly.

If you use your PDA with an infrared mobile phone, a normal dial-up account is probably best to use as your main email set-up; you can redirect any Web-based services you have to your dial-up account, meaning that you can get all your email wherever you go. More and more employers, universities and other organisations are also working to make email more flexible, meaning that you might already be able to forward your emails on elsewhere or even view them through your Internet browser.



Orange: sends you a text message when you get an email

Faxes and voicemails appear in your email inbox

The major mobile phone operators have also made email more flexible, too, by making WAP email accounts available through the Internet as Web-based email.

Orange's site at ***www.orange.net*** will even notify you when you have new email by sending you a text message. The good thing about this is that you'll always know if you have new email or not and so if you don't have any, you won't need to spend any money accessing your email. Genius. You can opt to only receive text messages if you get emails from certain individuals or even about a certain topic. Registration is easy, and you can access your email in a few easy clicks. You'll also get your own customisable mini-portal. Like all WAP email services, collecting your email is a slightly laborious task – especially when it comes to entering your username and password, which can take an age.

Virgin Xtras: puts the 'e' in phone

Vodafone's helpfully-named Vizzavi (vis-à-vis, you see) service - ***www.vizzavi.co.uk*** – does the same job perfectly, even if the change in name from vodafone.net does seem a little strange. The site has even got a tasteful WAP emulator so you can

THE FUTURE OF EMAIL HAS ARRIVED

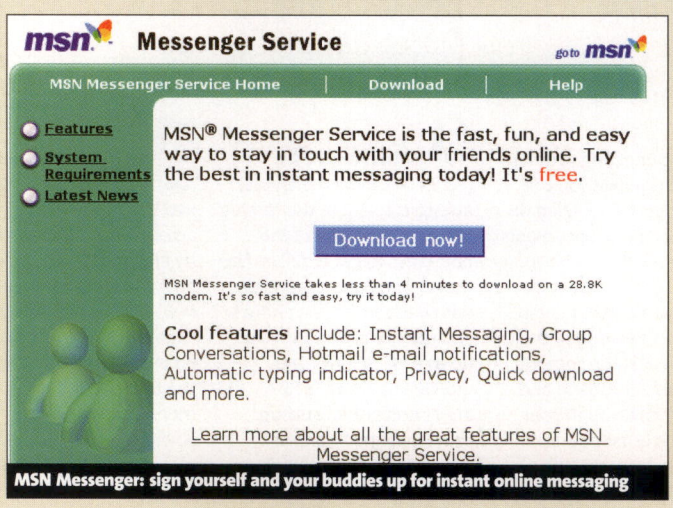
Instant messages – to your mobile or your desktop

Email and mobile phone text messaging will become more closely linked with one another as we get better phone displays. But aside from that vision of the future, some interesting developments have already occurred in the very separate areas of instant messaging and mobile phone text messaging.

Instant messaging is basically online chat, but with somebody that you've already signed up to a 'buddy list'. You can invite others to join your chat, but unlike a chat room you can't join any conversation you like.

Microsoft is at the vanguard of instant messaging. Its MSN Messenger service, freely available from *messenger.msn.com*, allows users to get hold of it and sign in straight away if they have a Hotmail account: it's part of Microsoft's sprawling sign-into-anything service Microsoft Passport. You could then message friends who've also signed up to Passport. Furthermore, MSN Messenger integrates with the new version of Outlook (Outlook 2002). It's also available bundled with MS's Office XP for the PC – see *www.microsoft.com/uk/office/outlook.htm* for full information.

What's more, Microsoft has now totally integrated Hotmail into Outlook. Not only can you receive Hotmail messages on your desktop, you can move them into your main Inbox and even send messages from Outlook through your Hotmail account. This means that if you're at work and want to send a personal email, it's now much easier. Hotmail, instant messaging and your traditional email are all available within one single window in Outlook. Microsoft has also started to offer mobile services in the US, including the ability to access Hotmail through WAP. And Microsoft isn't alone in trying to tie disparate technologies together: Netscape, now part of AOL, has integrated AOL's Instant Messenger into the new Netscape 6.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Cool features include: Instant Messaging, Group Conversations, Hotmail e-mail notifications, Automatic typing indicator, Privacy, Quick download and more.
Learn more about all the great features of MSN Messenger Service.
MSN Messenger: sign yourself and your buddies up for instant online messaging

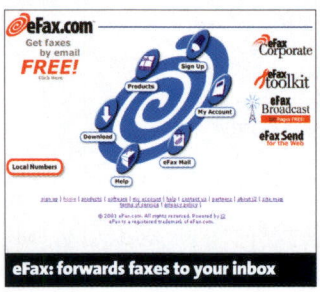
But Microsoft and AOL are put in the shade by instant messaging king ICQ, which has 100 million users worldwide. Its software is available for free download from *www.icq.com* and it'll only take you a few minutes to register.

Aside from the virtues of ICQ's Instant Messenger itself, the company has almost completely integrated text messaging and instant messaging. The reason this is important is that technologies are beginning to merge; you can instant-message a mobile phone with ICQ. The recipient can then reply to the message which will be sent directly back to the sender's computer. It's the first step towards totally integrated messaging and email.

see how slow it really is. Of all the phone operators, though, it's VirginMobile that offers the most WAP-friendly site, called Virgin Xtras (***www.vxtras.com***).

It supports your WAP phone in an altogether more useful way. The idea behind Virgin Xtras is that you can visit the site and customise your own WAP menus – that is to say that if you support Everton, you can visit the site, select Everton and that's what you'll see first in your football WAP menu. Virgin has also done well to provide an integrated Web mail service, too. The service will even let you top up your airtime, and you can personalise it .

Both Virgin and Vizzavi allow you to access your email with a WAP phone and if you often use WAP to



eFax: forwards faxes to your inbox

collect your email, the best solution is to use it in conjunction with the Web-based email at one of the portals. If you're with Virgin, you'll be in an even better position as you can also download messages from other email accounts. You'll then be able to receive the email from your other accounts through your WAP phone, too. This means you'll be laughing, as you'll be able to have a home-based account, a Web-based account and WAP access and they'll all fit snugly together.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Having borne all the alternatives in mind, let's get back to basics. If you want to make better use of your mail, the first thing to do is decide where you want your main email inbox to be. A good way to decide is to think of somewhere you can use as your email 'base'. If you use WAP more than anything else, this is likely to be the email box at your mobile phone portal. If you use your work account a lot, have a Web-based account set to forward all your mail there when you're in the office. And vice versa: if you spend most of your surfing time at home or out of the office, maybe you should make your Web-based email your main base.

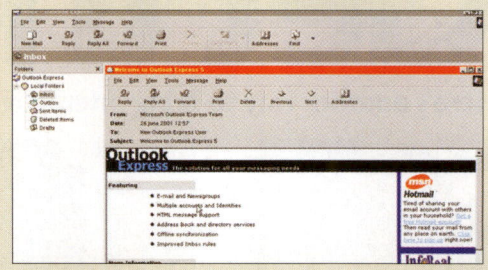
The main thing is to choose a system and stick to it. There's nothing worse than sending out emails every few months saying that you've changed address, annoying everyone in your address book...

EMAIL CLIENTS REVIEWED

WE PUT THE FOUR BIG EMAIL APPLICATIONS TO THE TEST

OUTLOOK EXPRESS

Free with Internet Explorer ★★★★★

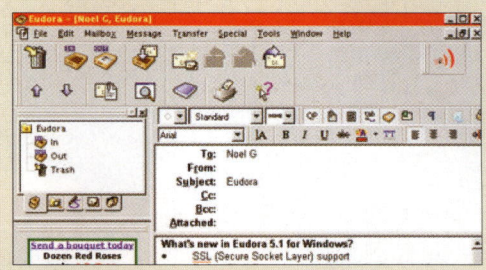


Soon to go into its sixth version (alongside bosom buddy Internet Explorer), possibly the only people Express doesn't appeal to are Microsoft-hating anti-capitalists who refuse to deal with Mr Gates. The trouble with Microsoft is that they continue to churn out quality pieces of software like this. Oh, and it won't cost you a penny, either.

The beta version of Outlook Express 6 is very buggy and, to be quite honest, you'd be better off not downloading it just yet. It does crossover with Hotmail as its bigger brother Outlook (see below) already does. Indeed, Outlook 2002 provides a good taste of the basic improvements that will be incorporated in the final version of OE 6. It's free along with Internet Explorer from just about every ISP around. Er, except Netscape Online, that is.

EUDORA

Free (Sponsored and Light versions) ★★★★

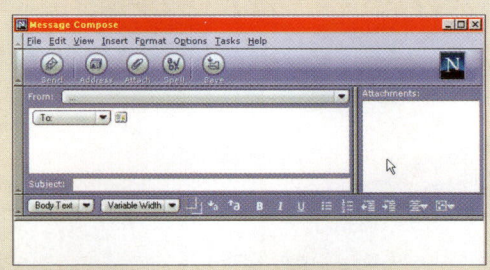


Eudora has often been seen as one of the best email applications, but, before last year, it was only available to buy. However, as well as the paid-up version there's now a sponsored version which you can get hold of for free, plus a Light version with reduced features.

The ads don't interfere too much, and Eudora is so easy to use we'd recommend it for absolutely anybody who wants a change from Outlook. Some aspects – notably newsgroups – seem even more integrated than Outlook and the icons are nice and big so usability for even the most email illiterate is a big benefit. One of the most interesting benefits is being able to access stats – you can see you email usage over a period of time including how many emails you send and receive a day. You even get a nice user manual in Adobe Acrobat format, too. Go to ***www.eudora.com*** to download it.

NETSCAPE MAIL

Free ★★★



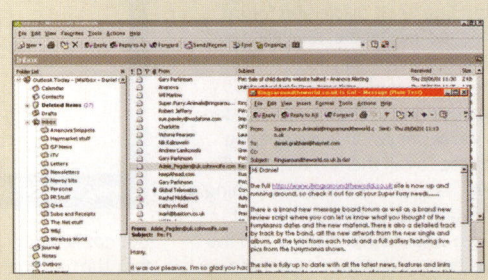
Now bundled with the Netscape 6 browser, the emailer carries the same hideous colour scheme as the browser. Still, it's another excellent email application and certainly as good as slightly older versions of Outlook. You might want to change the colours, that's all. In Netscape 6, the program is no longer known as Netscape Messenger. The new version is mostly the same as previous incarnations, just that now it's blue.

In the same way as all the various Outlooks now talk to Hotmail and MSN Messenger, Netscape allows AOL Instant Messaging users to connect to and mail buddies from within Netscape. There's also the ability to connect to your existing AOL mail account.

A nice addition (in common with the browser) is the inclusion of customisable tabbed panels on the left-hand side of the browser window. These hold various bits and pieces like your contacts, a search panel, your Instant Messaging window and other information taken straight from ***netscape.com*** such as news and weather. Unfortunately, although they're useful, they make the window look a tad untidy.

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK

Under £100 ★★★★



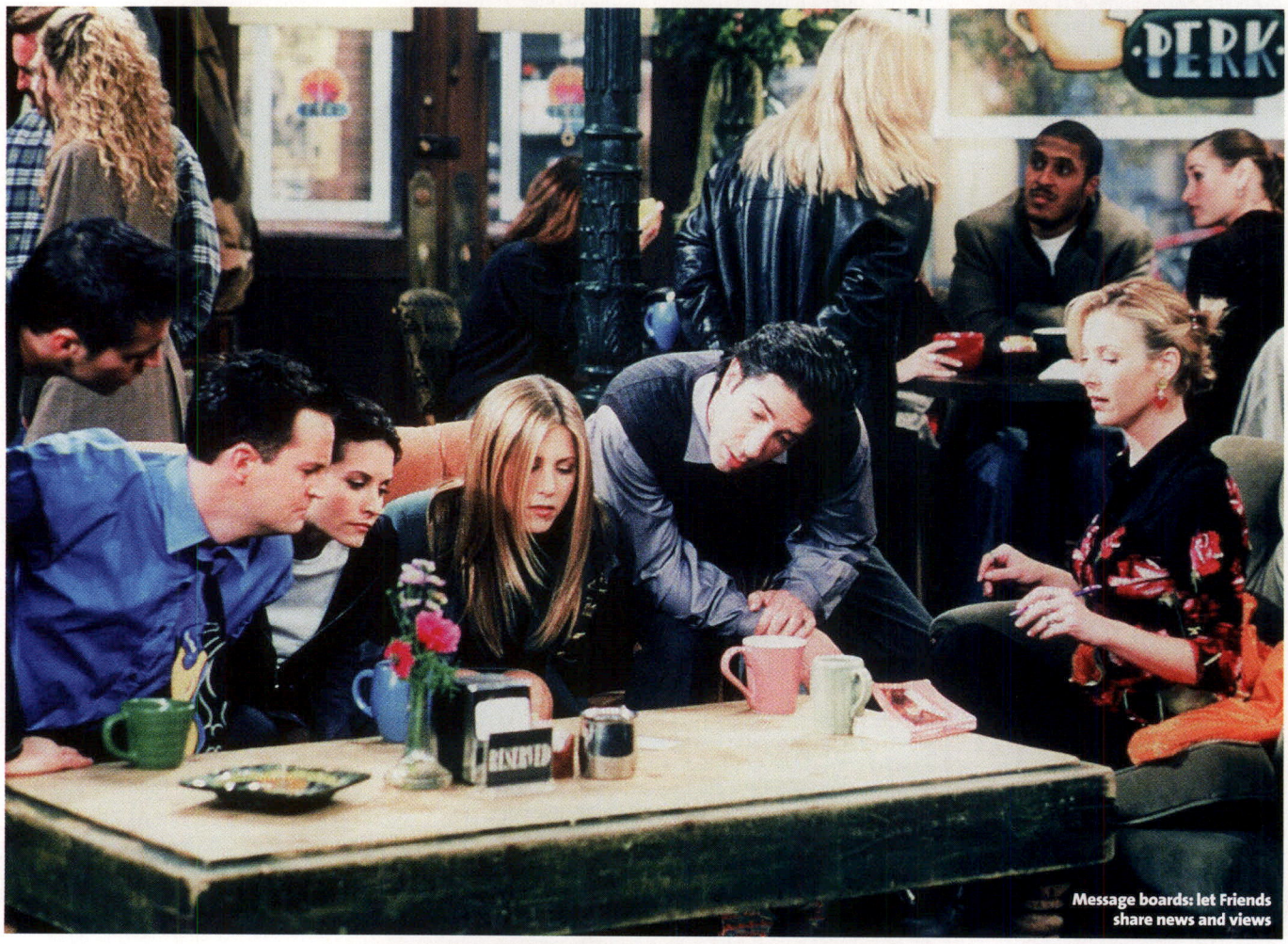
The latest version of Outlook is one of the centre-pieces of the new Office XP suite. It is available separately for £100 under the standalone name of Outlook 2002, and, if you're serious about email, this is your leader. Along with email, it'll integrate with just about every handheld device there is.

Outlook will handle appointments and calendars as well as 'to do' lists (companies can have shared calendars, and you can share yours through the Web, too). The only downside is also an upside: Outlook integrates with MSN Messenger and Hotmail to such an extent that those with anti-Microsoft tendencies will be tearing out their hair.

They mave have to get used to it: on its own Outlook 2002 is an incredible application, but as part of Office XP it's part of the best suite of programs there is. Forget 'where do you want to go today?', it's 'where can they go from here?'.

Get the message

Here's another way to bring interactivity to your site – set up your own discussion forum

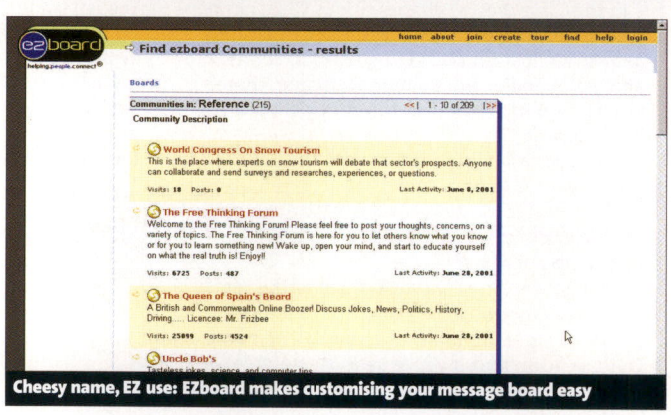


Message boards: let Friends share news and views

IT'S WELL KNOWN THAT YOU CAN improve visitor numbers to your Web site by upping its interactivity. One of the best ways to do this is to create a discussion forum.

The most confusing aspect of setting up a forum is actually understanding what 'discussion forum' means. Firstly, there are a variety of different terms for them, such as message board and discussion board. Either of these is correct, too.

However, whatever name you choose to call them, make sure it's not chat room. If there is one thing a message board is not, it's a chat room. Chat rooms make use of live real time chat. A user says something and then invites replies in the same window. As various people speak, you get an online instant conversation. A discussion forum, on the other hand, consists of somewhere where users can leave messages,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<< | 1 - 10 of 209 | >>
Community Description
World Congress On Snow Tourism
This is the place where experts on snow tourism will debate that sector's prospects. Anyone can collaborate and send surveys and researches, experiences, or questions.
Visits: 18 Posts: 0
Last Activity: June 8, 2001
The Free Thinking Forum
Welcome to the Free Thinking Forum! Please feel free to post your thoughts, concerns, on a variety of topics. The Free Thinking Forum is here for you to let others know what you know or for you to learn something new! Wake up, open your mind, and start to educate yourself on what the real truth is! Enjoy!!
Visits: 6725 Posts: 487
Last Activity: June 28, 2001
The Queen of Spain's Beard
A British and Commonwealth Online Booze! Discuss Jokes, News, Politics, History, Driving.... Licencee: Mr. Frizbee
Visits: 25899 Posts: 4524
Last Activity: June 28, 2001
Uncle Bob's

Cheesy name, EZ use: EZboard makes customising your message board easy

but not actually chat in 'real time'. In fact, the term message board is perhaps the most accurate name for a forum, since visitors to the forum are simply posting messages on a board. These messages then await a reply, and depending on the forum's popularity it could even be days before someone answers.

Live chat may be more dynamic, but it's also a pain for many site owners – it increases the potential for misuse and needs to be checked and maintained on a very regular basis. You do need to keep tabs on a forum – as there are always people who will post completely off-topic – but generally it's easier to look after.

NOT IN MY BACK YARD

The best way to set up a message board is to use a third-party site to create your forum. The 'forum' link on your site will lead the user to someone else's site where the discussion forum is be hosted. Just as there are sites queuing up to host your mailing lists and email, they're also after the users of your forum. Very often these sites will have adverts on them but don't worry about it – remember you're getting the service for free.

Web-based discussion forums go by many names: discussion boards, bulletin boards, threads, threaded discussions, Web conferences, and so on. Whatever you call them, forums are intended to provide a place for people to share their feelings, opin-

ions and ideas. We set up a discussion board at Delphi (***www.delphi.com***) – see the panel on this page to see how. Delphi is one of the most popular forum hosts but there are lots of other sites you can use, too.

For example, we rarely look at a free Internet service that Yahoo! hasn't got covered, and discussion forums are no exception. However, the area that Yahoo! brands 'message boards' – ***messages.yahoo.com*** – won't let you create your own. If what you want isn't covered, you'll have to be content with creating a Yahoo! Club (***clubs.yahoo.com***).

We covered Yahoo! Clubs in the last issue as a mailing list site, and indeed it does fulfil that role. However, mail discussion lists – ones you can reply to rather than just receiving information from – are basically email versions of forums and any emails that are sent out are also placed on your own Yahoo! Clubs site, which closely resembles a discussion board.

The cheesily-named EZboard (***www.ezboard.com***) is pretty impressive – it has over four million users. The best thing is that you can customise the look, feel and layout of your forum, plus there's an advanced service for anyone who knows how to use HTML.

This means that if you intend your message board to integrate into your site, you can do it quite easily. It's your choice if you want all-out customisation. As with many other board sites, you can make the board private (only available to a few selected users) or public, so that anybody can join.

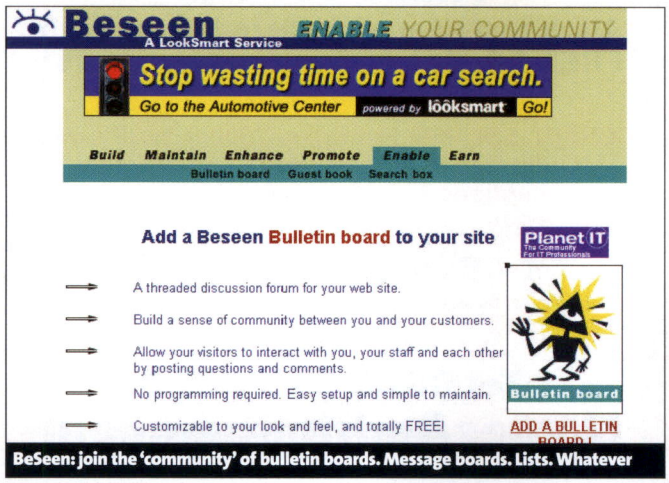
Other examples of simpler but worthy sites are ***www.boardhost.com***, which already hosts 75,000 boards, and BeSeen's board community at ***www.beseen.com/board***.

POSTING A MESSAGE

Putting a message onto the board is called 'posting'. If you're the first to post a message – in other words, you're not replying to someone else's message – then you're starting a 'thread'. The term may seem a little strange, but most of the messages posted to message boards are replies to earlier messages and then in turn there are replies to that reply and so on. So by the time a thread is abandoned, the contents of the posts may have changed subject several times and moved on in a different direction.

It's your choice whether you start a new thread or not, but you'll look a little silly if you start a new thread on a topic that is already being discussed elsewhere on the message board, so keep an eye on the whole board. Quite often, a new thread will be started by someone who wants to ask a question. The replies may then be a series of answers or comments on the answers or, indeed, the question itself.

Delphi forums allow you to launch and keep track of polls, so you can ask users what they think about a particular discussion point. Each forum can also be split into different areas, so *the net*'s forum might have a distinct area for the discussion of new sites as well as a general discussion area for Internet-related gossip and other goings-on.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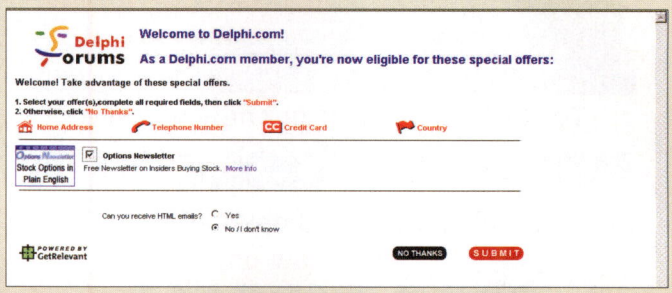
Bulletin board Guest book Search box
Add a Beseen Bulletin board to your site
Planet IT
A threaded discussion forum for your web site.
Build a sense of community between you and your customers.
Allow your visitors to interact with you, your staff and each other by posting questions and comments.
No programming required. Easy setup and simple to maintain.
Customizable to your look and feel, and totally FREE!
Bulletin board
ADD A BULLETIN
BeSeen: join the 'community' of bulletin boards. Message boards. Lists. Whatever

Discussion forums provide a place to share opinions, ideas and feelings

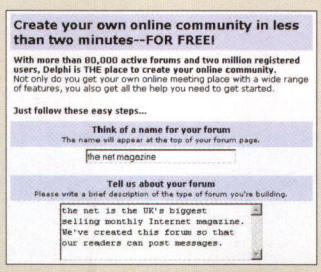
POST A MESSAGE
See the net's new forum and contribute to the discussion at *www.delphi.com/thenetnow*

SET UP YOUR OWN MESSAGE BOARD

1 We're going to use Delphi (***www.delphi.com***) to set up our message board. Firstly you'll have to register with the site before you can set up a forum or contribute to someone else's. You'll be able to browse through Delphi's forums, and even add your favourite ones to a 'My Delphi' page.



2 Once you've registered you'll be offered the chance to create your own forum (discussion board, message board, it's all the same). If you don't want to do this you can exit and simply sign into somebody else's forum. After registration you'll be taken through some other screens for optional mailing lists before arriving at the main page for creating a new forum.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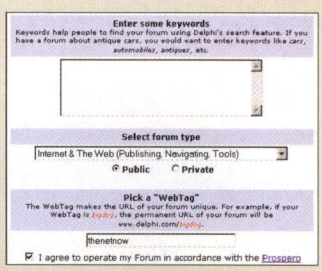
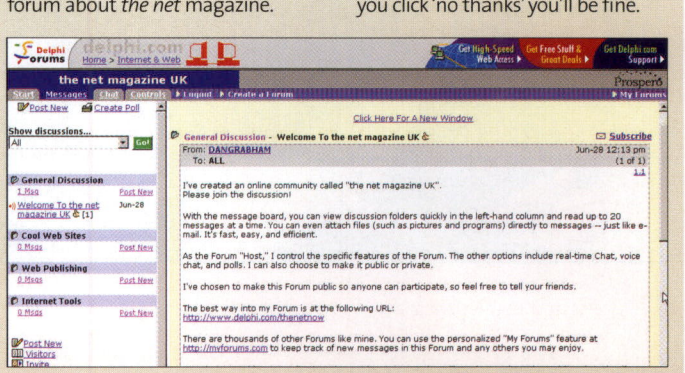
the net magazine
Tell us about your forum
Please write a brief description of the type of forum you're building.
the net is the UK's biggest selling monthly Internet magazine. We've created this forum so that our readers can post messages.

3 You'll be asked to think of a name and description for your forum as well as some keywords to help people search easily for your forum. You'll then be asked to indicate what type of forum it is – we've unsurprisingly chosen the category of 'Internet and the Web' for our forum about *the net* magazine.


Enter some keywords
Keywords help people to find your forum using Delphi's search feature. If you have a forum about antique cars, you would want to enter keywords like cars, automobiles, antiques, etc.
Select forum type
Internet & The Web (Publishing, Navigating, Tools)
Public
Private
Pick a "WebTag"
The WebTag makes the URL of your forum unique. For example, if your WebTag is bigdog, the permanent URL of your forum will be www.delphi.com/bigdog.
thenetnow
I agree to operate my Forum in accordance with the Prospero

4 You'll also be asked to pick a 'Web tag' which will decide the URL of your discussion board. Many free discussion board sites don't have the facility to have a direct URL. You will get offered lots of free newsletters and other bits and pieces as you sign up – but if you click 'no thanks' you'll be fine.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the net magazine UK
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Welcome To the net magazine UK
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I've created an online community called "the net magazine UK".
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With the message board, you can view discussion folders quickly in the left-hand column and read up to 20 messages at a time. You can even attach files (such as pictures and programs) directly to messages -- just like e-mail. It's fast, easy, and efficient.
As the Forum "Host," I control the specific features of the Forum. The other options include real-time Chat, voice chat, and polls. I can also choose to make it public or private.
I've chosen to make this Forum public so anyone can participate, so feel free to tell your friends.
The best way into my Forum is at the following URL:
http://www.delphi.com/thenetnow
There are thousands of other Forums like mine. You can use the personalized "My Forums" feature at http://myforums.com to keep track of new messages in this Forum and any others you may enjoy.

5 So there you have it – your very own discussion forum. Use it for your club, society or even a school. You can start a new thread, join in somebody else's discussion or just browse – it's completely up to you.

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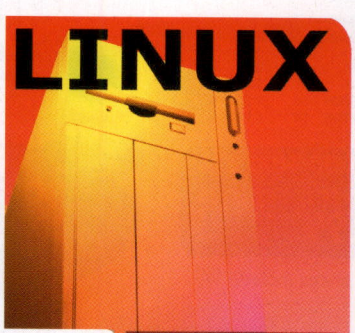

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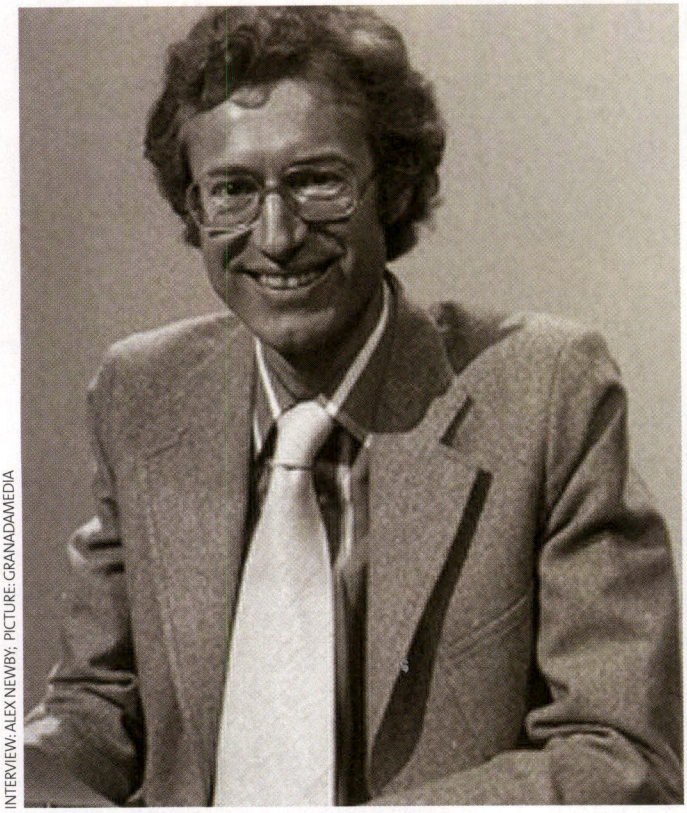


INTERVIEW: ALEX NEWBY; PICTURE: GRANADAMEDIA

Bamber Gascoigne

Your starter for 10 – why has the former *University Challenge* frontman turned into a Web master?

What did you first use the Web for?
I'm interested in art, so I asked it to find art sites, and the first site it came up was a thing which said, 'Here we have impressionist painters like Rubens and modern artists such as Van Gogh.' And I thought, an art site which thinks Rubens was an impressionist is not for me, so the Internet is not for me. But then, later, I was writing my history project as a CD-Rom, and somebody said 'it's got to be on the Internet'. By which time it had hugely improved, and since then I've used it for lots of things.

History can be a fusty old subject at times. How will your new Web site Historyworld (*www.historyworld.net*) help to bring it alive?
Well, for example, if you are reading about the Battle of Agincourt you can just click on a button which says 'WhatWhenWhere' and you'll immediately find yourself seeing other events around the world happening in 1415. And then on a single click from any of the rest of them, you'll find yourself reading about them in as much detail as you were reading about Agincourt. I think because it was written as a database, it's way ahead of any other educational site.

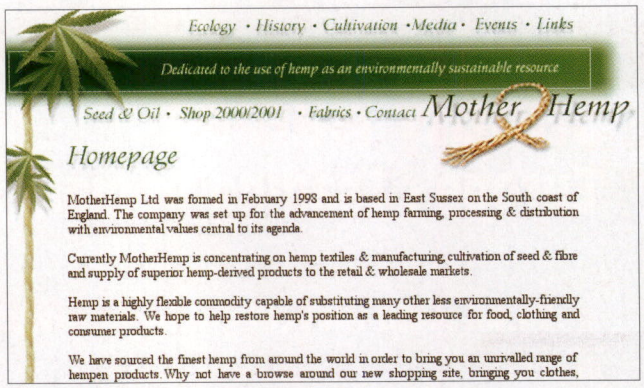
Do you feel the Internet has great potential for historians?
Oh unbelievably. I think we're living in the greatest gear change in human communication there's ever been. Publishers of material don't have to deliver it to the users. Now, suddenly, you just put it up in this unimaginable cyberspace, and people come and get it.

Do you think anyone should be able to publish on the Web?
Yes. I think the lovely thing about the Internet is that anybody can put anything up, and for the sheer fun of surfing the Net, it is lovely to get all the dodgy ones that come up. But I do think we need more editors.

How does the Internet have the edge over old media?
I think it has the edge fantastically in reference material, the ability to find things quickly. It's more than just convenience; it's the complete new facility of this information.

Do you think the Internet makes University less of a challenge?
No – on the whole people assume it's quite hard to discover facts, but I think the Internet will break that down and they'll realise that things are available to all of us.

BAMBER'S BEST OF THE WEB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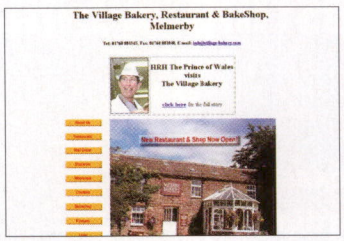
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